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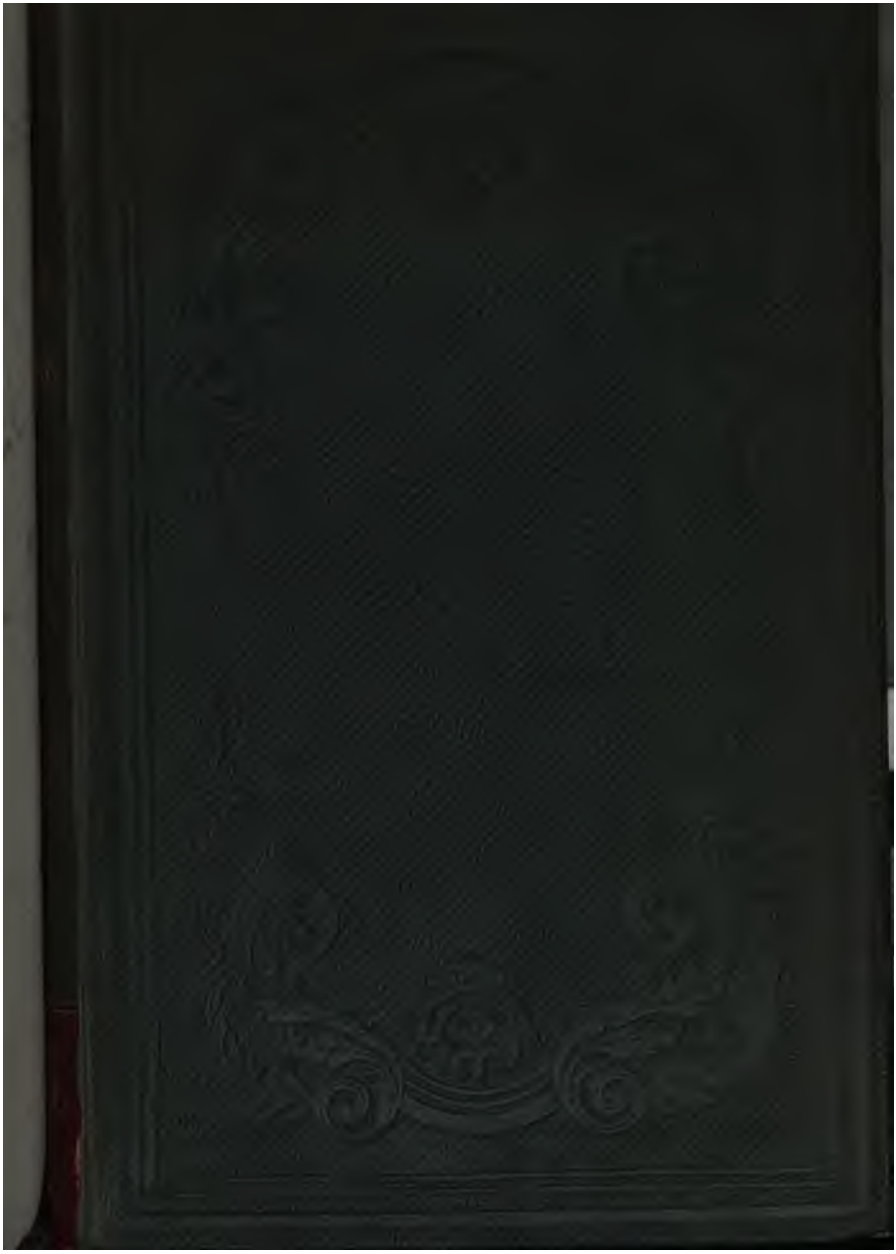

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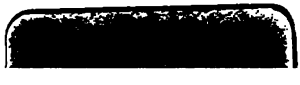

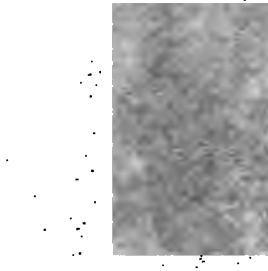

THE

MOUNTAINS OF SCRIPTURE.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
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PREFACE.

It is one of the most gratifying characteristics of the present day, that so general an interest should exist in all that is connected with the Holy Land. The most intellectual and gifted are never weary of research and inquiry, and the humblest artisan solaces his hours of recreation in reading of, or hearing information on, a subject so attractive. "Artists," says a well-known writer, "love to pourtray its venerable scenes, and all men gaze on their efforts with wonder and delight. The divine, the scholar, the philosopher, and the poet, the subjects of most kingdoms, the dwellers in distant climes, all have bent, and are daily bending, their steps to the land of Scripture history." And this is not surprising when we reflect, that, small as is the territory of Palestine,

yet, there is no spot upon the face of the earth, with which can be associated so various, and so vast an accumulation of the highest historical interest. It is one which God especially set apart for his great designs, and which, in consequence, contains no portion of ground which does not suggest incidents in the histories of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, priests, and kings, whose names supply the familiar links of that chain by which we are connected with the sacred times of old. To the researches of those who, for the sake of enlarging the ways of knowledge, were first tempted to endure privation in these lands of interest, a vast mass of further information is now added; and from these, the labours of more modern times, we purpose to select descriptions of some of the most striking objects in the East, the Mountains mentioned in Scripture, interweaving the statements of various travellers who have visited and explored places of such lasting interest. For although the country has ceased to be the seat of triumphant

empire, her goodly cities being desolate, and her rich lands comparatively waste, yet Nature is still the same, and in no page of her volume can we trace scenes of wilder grandeur, combined with more peculiar interest, than the one we have chosen for our subject.

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THE

MOUNTAINS OF SCRIPTURE.

CHAPTER I.

MOUNT ARARAT.

THE name ARARAT is in Holy Scripture applied to the country upon the mountains of which the ark rested during the subsidence of the flood. The word signifies "the mountain of descent," and there is scarcely a nation in the East who do not claim for the mountains of their own land the honour of having afforded a resting place to this miraculous refuge of the second parent of mankind. Thus we are informed by the lamented Sir A. Burnes, in his travels to Bokhara, that on the road to Peshawar and Cabul, the Sufued Koh, or "White Mountain," rears its crest on one side, and the towering hill of Kooner on the other. Here the Affghans believe the ark of Noah to have rested after the deluge. Another sacred mountain in the east is Adam's Peak, in the

island of Ceylon. Many ingenious theories have been framed in forgetfulness of what the Bible has recorded respecting the locality of Ararat, but we can without difficulty decide that it was neither in Affghanistan nor Ceylon, neither in Asia Minor, nor in northern India, but in Armenia.

The difficulties which formerly beset every attempt to make any scientific researches on this mountain, while it constituted the landmark between two states in hostility with Christendom, were sufficient to repress the ardour of the most zealous traveller and naturalist. But when the peace between Russia and Persia in 1828 took place, the domain of Christendom was extended beyond the Araxes, and Mount Ararat became the extreme boundary of the Russian empire on the side of Turkey and Persia. The eminent professor, Dr. Parrot, then determined, with the sanction of the Emperor, to ascend a mountain which for many years he had earnestly desired to explore. He was accompanied by two gentlemen who employed themselves in making zoological and botanical observations and collections; and from the united efforts of the three, Professor Parrot's expedition has become one of the most interesting events of the kind which has ever occurred. His Imperial Majesty not only gave the scheme his full approval, but commanded a courier to attend the travellers, and on their

return reimbursed all the expenses they had incurred, and conferred the order of St. Anne of the second class on the eminent conductor of so successful an enterprise. And well bestowed was the dignity, for, as Baron Humboldt remarks, "We cannot praise too highly the candour and extreme love of truth, with which the Professor carried out his noble exertions in the behalf of science." In the "World surveyed in the Nineteenth Century," Mr. Cooley has given a long and interesting detail of the journey from Russia; but we must confine ourselves to the latter part of his history of the undertaking, and describe some of the most striking incidents in the ascent of Mount Ararat.

If the exploration of a great mountain redounds, generally speaking, to the advantage of science, and affords enjoyment to the admirer of nature—if even a bare rock or little hill, left untouched by the hand of man, affects, from a pure and simple sense of nature, the heart of the observer, what must not be the feelings of the Christian when he fixes his eyes on that sacred mountain, where all the attractions of natural grandeur, so long concealed from our view, are united to the peculiar interest of a primitive monument and witness of one of the most remarkable events in the history of the world, and of God's immediate dispensation for the preservation of the human race!

In the most ancient, as well as most holy of all books, we read, that the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. These are, Great Ararat, and its immediate neighbour the Less Ararat: the former on the north west, the latter on the south east; their summits distant from each other, in a right line, about seven miles, and their bases insensibly melting into one another, by the interposition of a wide level valley now used as pasture grounds by the shepherds. The plain on which they rise is a portion of the land of Armenia watered by the river Araxes, seventy miles of which length may be taken in with the eye. The summit of the Great Ararat lies in 39° 42′ north latitude, and 44° 25′ east longitude, from Greenwich; it has an elevation of 17,210 feet perpendicular, or more than three miles and a quarter above the sea, and 14,320 feet, or nearly two miles and a quarter above the plain of the Araxes, and exceeds by 1,528 feet Mont Blanc, the point of greatest elevation in Europe. The north-eastern slope of the mountain may be assumed at fourteen, the north-western at twenty miles in length. On the former, even from a very great distance, a deep gloomy chasm is visible, which has been compared to a crater, but looks more as if the mountain had once been split from top to bottom. In certain positions,

when seen from a distance, the summit bears a striking resemblance to a ship.

The whole country round abounds with traditionary stories about Noah's ark, and the flood. The Armenians call Ararat, the Mountain of the Ark; the Persians, the Mountain of Noah. It is a common belief that the remains of the ark still exist on the summit, though the wood is converted into stone; and in a church near the junction of the two Armenian rivers, Aras and Kur, they actually show a cross which they state was many centuries ago made out of one of its planks. In 1720, Peter the Great sent some Armenians and Russians to ascertain if the ark was still to be seen, and they were scarcely credited when they stated that nothing of the kind existed. The report, however, in no way shook the faith of the true believers, who with great reason stated that the summit of the mountain was unapproachable. The Armenian monk who procured the plank from which the cross was formed, had been, when nearly exhausted by his efforts to ascend, met by an angel who compassionately procured and handed him the precious relic. The higher regions are usually clothed with clouds, and whenever these are dispersed, and the summit is unveiled, the devout Armenians fall on the ground, cross themselves, and pray. At Erivan they show the spot where Noah first

planted the vine; and the name of another town, Nachichevan, means, according to Chardin, 'place of descent,' being the place where Noah first settled, when he came out of the ark. The smaller cone is considerably lower, for the snow disappears from its summit during the summer, and it serves as a calendar to the surrounding people, who regulate their agricultural proceedings by the progress of the melting of the snow on Little Ararat. On approaching Mount Ararat from the convent of Elschmiadsin, where he had been most hospitably entertained by the priests, Professor Parrot seems to have been impressed with emotions similar to those which the Holy Land never fails to excite in the minds of Christian travellers. A thunder storm enveloped Ararat at the moment, "but the rolling of the thunder," says the Professor, "did not disturb me; I enthusiastically indulged now in the contemplation of the country spread before me—the longed-for goal of my undertaking; now in deep reflections on an ancient period replete with the most interesting historical events. How could it be otherwise? I was at the foot of Mount Ararat, the mountain of the patriarch Noah."

Sir Robert Ker Porter paints in glowing colours his approach to Ararat from the north. "It appeared," says Ker Porter, "as if the hugest mountains of the world had been piled upon each other

to form this one sublime immensity of rocks, earth, and snow. The icy peaks of its double heads rose majestically into the clear and cloudless heavens; the sun blazed bright upon them, and the reflection sent forth a dazzling radiance equal to other suns. My eye, not able to rest for any length of time upon the blinding glory of its summits, wandered down the apparently interminable sides, till I could no longer trace their vast lines in the mist of the horizon — when an irrepressible impulse immediately carrying my eye upwards, again refixed my gaze upon the awful glare of Ararat." To the same effect writes Morier:— "Nothing can be more beautiful than its shape, more awful than its height; all the surrounding mountains sink into insignificance when compared to it. It is perfect in all its parts; no hard, rugged features, no unnatural prominences, every thing is in harmony, and all combines to render it one of the sublimest objects in nature."

At the convent of St. James, and the village of Arguri, situated on the sloping base of the mountain, the Professor received a kindly welcome from the hospitable priests, and particularly mentions, in passing near the plantations of Arguri, the kindness of some shepherds. "We met," says he, "with a great flock of sheep, and as, notwithstanding the advanced season of the year, we suffered exceedingly from the heat, the

obliging shepherd, who had a little store of sheep's milk ready for himself, liberally gave us as much of it as we desired. I found it an excellent cooling drink, one which may be taken even in the greatest heat without risk, and at the same time is of an agreeable flavour."

At this convent preparations were made for the ascent; the difficulties of which task were very great, as Ararat, in addition to its height, is remarkably steep. Though the priests expected no good issue to such an undertaking, they threw no obstacles in the way. On the 24th of September 1829, at seven o'clock in the morning, Professor Parrot started on his way, attended by M. Schiemann, one of the medical students who had accompanied him from Russia for the purpose of making zoological observations. One of the Kossaks, and a peasant from Arguri, a hunter, were also of the party: and they directed their steps first to the ravine and then along its left declivity, till they came to a spot where there were two small buildings of squared stone, standing near each other, one of which was formerly a chapel, and the other erected over a well, reputed to be holy, to which the Armenians are in the habit of making pilgrimages for the performance of religious ceremonies, after which they amuse themselves, in a remote part of the valley, with discharges of fire-arms, and other demonstrations

of joy. A curious tradition is attached to this almost solitary spring of Ararat. The country of Armenia is subject to incursions from locusts, which come in immense swarms, and will in one day lay waste whole tracts of land. These creatures can neither be dispersed nor destroyed, except by one bird, a kind of starling, which also visits the country in flocks when the mulberries are ripe, and soon rids the country of the devouring plague. To entice them to so useful a work, the Armenians place a vessel filled with water from this holy well, and place it where the locusts are committing their ravages, and the flock of birds is said to appear immediately.

From Mr. Barrow we also learn that, travelling for some days without seeing any trees or bushes, he met with a clump of about half a dozen large bushes, which attracted his notice from the vast number and size of the nests with which they appeared to be loaded. On approaching, a numerous flock of birds, about the size of the common skylark, issued from them. The farmers immediately recognised the bird to be called Semermer or locust-eater, and rejoiced not a little at its appearance so near the colony. This species of thrush is a migrating bird, and is only met with in places which the migrating locust frequents. It had not been seen in the colony for the space of thirteen years; that is to say, since the last time that the locusts infested

stock of provisions was but small, they resolved to return. Having contented themselves with making some barometrical observations, and having had the satisfaction of knowing that the mountain was by no means inaccessible on this side, they turned about, and immediately fell into a danger they had not at all anticipated. In the descent of any mountain, the tread is made less firmly than in going up, and it is still more difficult to tread securely when a surface of ice and snow is looked down upon, when, if any slip is made, there is nothing to stop the way but the sharp-pointed masses of stone, in which the region of eternal ice loses itself. Mr. Schiemann, whose courage had probably been proof against severer trials, here lost his presence of mind; his foot slipped and he fell, but, as he was about twenty paces behind, the Professor had time to thrust his pole firmly into the ice, to take a sure footing in his snow shoes, and while he held his pole in the right hand, to catch him, in passing, with the left. The position was well-chosen, but the straps which fastened the ice-shoes of the Professor, broke, and instead of being able to stop his friend, he was carried with him in his fall. Mr. Schiemann was so fortunate as to be stopped by some stones, but the Professor rolled on for nearly a quarter of a mile, until he reached some fragments of lava, near the lower glacier. In

this accident the tube of the barometer was broken to pieces, the chronometer burst open, and all the contents of his pockets were turned out, but the Professor happily escaped without severe injury. As soon as they had recovered from the fright, and had thanked God for so merciful a preservation, they collected as many of their scattered articles as they could find, and then resumed the journey down. By cutting steps in it, they crossed a small glacier, and soon afterwards heard, with joy, the voice of their guide Isaac, who had lighted a fire of the dry grass around, in expectation of their return, and by it they passed the night. On the third day, about ten in the morning, they reached the monastery, where they refreshed themselves with peaches and a good breakfast, carefully avoiding any allusion to the fall they had encountered. The Armenians would not have failed to discover therein the divine punishment on so rash an attempt to arrive at the summit of a spot, access to which had been forbidden by Heaven to mortals. On the following day, the Professor had a severe attack of fever, of which he says he entirely cured himself by the simple use of tea, and a little garlic eaten with salt and bread. He then set about mending the barometer, and made other preparations for reaching the summit of Ararat, by hiring attendants and beasts of burden, providing food,

and then got ready the inscription on a strong leaden plate which he intended to take with him, and to fasten on a cross to be erected on the highest point. This cross was of fir-wood, ten feet long, it was painted black, and easily taken asunder. Before they started on the 18th of September, the cross was put together, consecrated and anointed with holy oil, by the principal of the convent. It was then taken asunder and fastened on the oxen. About half-past eight, Professor Parrot, his two friends, the deacon Avovian, four Armenian peasants, three Russian soldiers, and a driver for the four oxen, set out on the second expedition. They, this time, tried the ascent of the mountain from the north-west side, where the way, though considerably longer than on the eastern declivity, is in general much less steep. For some little time they met with paths over withered grass, but then came to a tract covered with volcanic sand and shingle, in which they sank ankle deep. About eleven o'clock, they arrived at a stony precipitous tract, and here the Professor and his friends were obliged to alight from their horses on which they had come thus far, and send them back by the Kossaks who had accompanied them for the purpose. A little Persian pony, on which the peasant Stepan was mounted, seemed better able to endure the hardship of travelling on such rough

ground, and carried his tall master with unwearied strength and activity over the steepest and most dangerous places. They next reached a plain well carpeted with grass, where, after five hours' uninterrupted ascent, they were glad to rest and refresh themselves with soup, which they heated by means of a fire made of the dry dung scattered round this summer pasture-ground, while the cattle made a hearty meal on the half-green herbage. At six o'clock, having reached a height of more than 13,000 feet, they fixed their night quarters among some large and conveniently placed masses of rock, and kindled a fire with fuel brought for the purpose, and the cattle were turned loose to feed as they could. The Professor was suffering too much from a contusion on the hip, received on the occasion of the last journey, to be able to sleep, but was ready at half-past seven in the morning to resume the march.

In about two hours they reached the limits of the properly so-called ice and snow, the ascent to which was particularly fatiguing from the steepness of the crags, which consisted of masses piled one upon the other. These offered good angles and edges for the hands and feet; but threw great impediments in the way of carrying up the cross. Various expedients were tried in vain, until at length one of the Armenian peasants, seeing that the plan of taking it was about to be

abandoned, threw the long beam over his shoulders, and then drew the end of his frock over it from behind: with this heavy burden he contrived to make his way up the rugged and winding path. For an instant the party halted when they reached the pyramid of snow projecting with wonderful grandeur against the clear blue sky, and then in silence set foot upon that region which "certainly," says the Professor, "since the time of Noah, no human being had ever trodden." At first the progress was easy, but at length, to avoid constantly sliding back on the ice, they were compelled to cut steps; for which purpose some of the party had brought little bill hooks and ice axes, while others used the ice staffs.

The general rule in the ascent was that the leader should only cut the ice just enough to allow himself to mount, and that each as he followed should enlarge the step; and thus, while the labour of the foremost was lightened, a good path was prepared for the descent, wherein a much firmer footing was required. This proceeding caused great delay to the travellers, and though in the preceding stony region they had been able to gain about 1000 feet of elevation in an hour, they could now with difficulty clear 600 feet. After crossing a most perilous crack in the ice, and ascending a moderate slope, they found themselves on a nearly level plain of

snow, forming a principal step on that side of Ararat. Here, to the great sorrow of the party, they were obliged to stop in their progress, for a strong humid wind arose, which is generally the precursor of a snow-storm. The Professor, having sought out a spot visible from the monastery, or at least from Erivan, proceeded to erect the cross, which had been brought with so much care and difficulty for the purpose. While some were employed in cutting a hole about two feet deep in the ice, with bills and poles, others joined together the timbers of the cross with two strong screws, and over the joint, fastened in like manner with screws, placed the leaden plate, weighing twenty-seven pounds. The cross was then raised, and with pieces of ice and snow firmly fixed in the hole. From its being painted black, and strongly relieved by the steep snows of the summit, the Professor considered that, with the aid of a telescope it would be distinctly visible from Erivan. It was with great reluctance that the party relinquished the hope of reaching the summit; but even if the weather had been more propitious, they were not provided with means for spending the night on the icy pinnacle, and consoling themselves with the hope of a third and more successful attempt, they turned, and without any accident beyond a transient giddiness to one of the party, reached, before night had

fully set in, the place where they had rested at noon on their way up. Here the sturdy guide, Melik, found his horse, the oxen, and the drivers, for they had sagaciously determined on descending from the inhospitable rocks and glaciers among which the party had left them, to wait for their return in a spot more welcome to the weary travellers. They gladly warmed themselves at a brisk fire, for they had hardly quitted the snowy region in the descent, than a heavy fall of snow covered the whole tract. Having partaken of the evening repast, they sought shelter for the night under the large rocks scattered in great numbers over the plain; and on the following day, at about ten o'clock in the morning, again reached the monastery of St. James. And while they are resting here, previous to the third attempt, we will give a little information connected with their hospitable refuge, and the mode of living pursued by these enterprising travellers.

CHAPTER II.

THE Monastery of St. James, which consisted of a church, is built in the form of a cross with a cupola in the middle, and is entirely formed of hewn stone of hard lava. Against this clay buildings are built, in some of the apartments of which, the Professor and his party were simply, though hospitably entertained. Their furniture consisted of the blankets, pelisses, cloaks and chests brought with them. The dinner table was a singular piece of basket work of split wood interwoven, not quite so high as a common seat, and too tottering for a work table. Those who did not like to eat standing, might seat themselves on a large stone. This room being too dark for the numerous and important observations to be made with the instruments, these were placed in a tent of sailcloth and white woollen, which was pitched in the middle of the court, and the Professor, for the purpose of watching instruments so valuable, took up his night quarters with them. Comfortable arrangements were made for the subsistence and wants of the travellers, who were,

including Kossaks and soldiers, seventeen in number. The courier was despatched to Erivan with money for the purchase of provisions. One of the soldiers was an excellent cook; another, somewhat advanced in years, was appointed superintendent, distributed the rations, and formally reported to the Professor every morning, according to military custom, whatever had occurred. The fodder for the horses, eleven in number, consisted partly of barley, for oats are not cultivated in this country, and partly of hay, the procuring of which, at that season of the year, and particularly after a dry summer, gave some trouble. A sheep could be bought in Arguri whenever necessary, and eggs, milk, and pullets could also be had, but the Professor had been obliged at first to lay a strict interdict on that place, as the plague had been raging there, and a few persons in it were still only recovering, all dealings therefore were carried on with great caution. The people who came from the village were not allowed to stay in St. James's a moment longer than necessary. The purchased sheep were sprinkled with chloride of lime, as well as the woollen sacks in which the barley for the horses was brought to them from places in the neighbourhood. But far better flavoured, and more nutritive than the mutton, was the flesh of wild hogs, shot by the Kossaks among the reeds of the river, a large portion of

which was salted in a great crock, which happened to be in the monastery. These hogs are of a dirty darkish yellow grey colour, and lie concealed in great numbers, issuing forth only at night to the rice fields of the Tatars, on which they commit terrible devastations. The inhabitants, therefore, as soon as the rice begins to ripen, watch the fields at night, having dogs with them, which they set upon the hogs. In this way the latter are sometimes caught, and torn to pieces in the fields. The peasants often petitioned the travellers to shoot the wild hogs which were laying waste their rice fields. The river in which they most abounded, had very marshy banks, extending in some places for miles, covered with an almost impenetrable growth of reeds. On one of the expeditions they shot a hog which weighed more than 280lb. While it was being skinned, the Tatars gathered round, begging for the skin, and lard, to serve as ointment for wounds. The Kossak, to get rid of them, threatened to anoint them with the fat of the beast which is to them an unclean one, and jeeringly asking why, if they really wanted the lard, they did not shoot this beast themselves. They would not, however, even receive the much-prized ointment in their fingers, but split a piece of wood, so as to make a rude kind of forceps to hold it.

M. Schiemann did not fail also to supply the

table with game, and dried fish was brought for purchase, particularly a well-flavoured kind of salmon trout. The Archimandrite, or chief of the convent, obligingly supplied them with cream, for which they daily provided him with tea and wine. With the latter they were constantly supplied in goat-skin bottles from Erivan. In this country, wine is never kept in casks, but either in earthen jars buried in the ground, or in leathern bottles. These latter are made of the skins of goats, oxen, and buffaloes, turned inside out, clipped with the scissors, washed, and rubbed over with mineral tar, or, as it is called, naphtha. This, as might be supposed, gives an unpleasant flavour to the wine, which however is partly lost after the skins have been some time in use, and they then become more valuable than new ones. The openings of the skin are closed with a sort of wooden bung, except at the feet, where they are only tied with a cord; and the wine is drawn from a foot merely by opening the noose. It is a strange and whimsical sight to the stranger to see oxen, buffaloes, and goats, full of wine, lying in the wine booth, or in the streets, with their legs stretched out. Such skins are, however, very convenient either for home use or for carriage; for they may be had of all sizes, some very small, as the skins of young kids which hold but a few bottles. The jars which are used for keeping wine are of clay,

and of very large size, generally from six to seven feet high and four feet wide; holding from 1,000 to 1,500 imperial gallons, sometimes more. They are firmly sunk in the ground to the brim, and when filled with wine the mouth is covered with a round piece of slate, and heaped over with earth, which serves the double purpose of preserving the wine, and hiding the place where it is buried. From Erivan also they procured groats, lentiles, dried apricots, raisins, rice, onions, salt, pepper, sugar, tea, and rum. The last three at a very high price, the sugar costing from two to three rubles (six to seven shillings) a pound. Occasionally they had a basket of grapes and other fruit, particularly apricots from the magnificent groves of these trees which abound near Arguri. From some springs about half a mile distant they were obliged to get their supply of water, that of the Arguri brook being so muddy as to be only fit for the cattle and for cooking; from containing such a quantity of earthy particles it was also quite unfit for washing, and this process consequently took place at the springs, which issued from the rocks. At first they were but ill off for bread. The Armenians make use of a kind which, whatever its good qualities in other respects, wants the flavour and nourishment requisite for the European palate and stomach.

The Cosh, as they call it, is a thin cake, a yard

long, half a yard wide, and about as thick as the blade of a knife, rolled out of slightly fermented dough; being spread on a leathern cushion, it is pressed against the inside of a heated oven, to which it adheres: in two or three minutes it is baked through, and here and there burnt a little; it is then torn off to make room for another. The oven is of a peculiar kind; a pit in the chamber or porch of the dwelling, wide at the bottom, narrow above, well coated with fine plaster, and heated with wood; when not in use it is covered over. This cosh is the bread universally used among the Armenians, and it serves many purposes. At meals, the table is covered with it; and every one partaking has a whole cosh set before him, as a napkin with which, preparatory to eating, he may wipe his mouth. When sour milk is a part of the feast, a piece of cosh is broken off, folded up so as to make a spoon; it is then dipped in the bowl, and bread and milk are swallowed together. Raw and preserved roots and stalks of edible plants, which are always to be found on the tables of the Armenians, are, with the addition of a bit of fish, or meat, wrapped up in a piece of cosh, and the whole eaten together. Another kind of bread called Bocken, sometimes made use of in Armenia, is baked in flat round cakes about an inch thick; but this did not supply the place of European bread, and the soldiers were

so desirous of finding some better substitute, that after various experiments they succeeded in making some extremely well tasted and wholesome bread of good rye meal. Neither in the monastery nor in the village was there a trough to be procured large enough to prepare the dough in, wood being in this country, far and wide, an expensive article, and wooden ware consequently almost unknown. But the Kossaks, though without trough, oven, or table of wood, contrived to attain their object. Close to the monastery was a steep bank of clay mixed with sand; in this they made a horizontal excavation for an oven: a stone that fitted the opening served as a door; a hollow within it, well coated with plaster, was the trough in which the dough was kneaded, and left to ferment for two days; another levelled and smooth place in the same bank did duty as a table.

The whole kitchen apparatus of the travellers consisted of two iron pots, and one pan, which, when taken from the fire, were set upon the table without any ceremony; for smaller matters they had a pair of tinned dishes, fitted for travelling, with half a dozen plates tinned in like manner. Each of the gentlemen had his knife and fork, silver spoon, and glass. The wood for the cooking-fire was fetched from a considerable distance and was merely crooked and broken twigs and branches. For the fire in their own apart-

ment they used the dry dung which in that country the people collect and lay by for fuel, just as we do wood; it is easily kindled, and throws out a great heat without any unpleasant odour. It was procured in great quantities, as the inhabitants of Arguri lived by the breeding of cattle and horses. This Armenian village was the only one upon Mount Ararat. It contained about 275 families, with a well-built church, a pastor of its own, and a village elder or chief, of respectable condition; the richer class had vineyards adjoining the village, and these were, according to tradition, on the spot where "Noah began to be a husbandman, and planted a vineyard." The people are described by the Professor, as living in great peace and contentment, and he appears to have become quite attached to the venerable Archimandrite of St. James, from whom they met with so hospitable a reception.

"In a poor monastery on the high steeps of the lofty Ararat, completely separated from what in Armenia may be called the civilized world, attended by two servants only to look after his household, and his little stock of cattle, the Archimandrite might have led a happy life in the edifying contemplation of God's works and providence, and might have enjoyed an enviable lot, if by resigning riches and worldly greatness he could also have escaped the grasping selfishness and

covetousness of the Persian subordinates, who extended their arbitrary levy of contributions even to the poor monastery on the heights of Ararat, carried off the cattle reared with so much care, and did not scruple even to personally maltreat the venerable old man." That general place of rest to which he had attended so many of his brethren, was consequently, long since, an object of desire to him; and since he could not hope that after his death any one would take the trouble to bestow pains on his tomb, he made it his amusement to do it himself, and for years he was in the habit of working at his own grave on the pretty hill not far from St. James, and on which is the burial ground of Arguri. After having dug the grave, he was employed in lining it neatly with stones, and daily might the old man be seen in his worn-out garments, the trowel and some mortar in his hands, going off with a contented heart to add stone to stone, until perhaps exhausted with the effort he would fall asleep, resting on the stone which was to cover his future grave. This great tomb-stone which had been made by a stone-cutter, was covered with an Armenian inscription. But if the venerable old man survived so long, he now rests under a mightier tomb; for in the summer of 1840, Armenia was visited by a violent earthquake, which shook Ararat to its foundation. The im-

mense quantities of loose stones, snow, ice, and mud then precipitated from the great chasm immediately overwhelmed and destroyed the monastery of St. James, where Dr. Parrot resided for so long, and the ancient village of Arguri, with the vineyards traditionally believed to have been planted by Noah. It also spread destruction far and wide in the plain of the Araxes. This devastating earthquake was first felt at Ararat on the 20th of June, a little after six in the evening, and continued with alternating shocks and undulatory motion of the earth for two minutes. The streams of mud and melted snow poured down from the great chasm, and covered the fields and gardens to the distance of seven miles. Of the population of Arguri, estimated at a thousand souls, not one escaped. Throughout the villages in Armenia the habitations laid in ruins amounted to between six and seven thousand. Had not the earthquake taken place at the hour when the Easterns generally quit the shelter of their roofs to enjoy the freshness of the open air, its effects would have been much more fatal; but it does not appear that above fifty people, exclusive of those who perished on Ararat, lost their lives on the occasion by being buried in the ruins of their dwellings. Shocks were daily felt in the villages near Ararat, till the 26th of June, each continuing about two or

three minutes. It was on the 24th that the great fall, as it has been called, of Ararat took place. At the commencement of the earthquake, the monastery of St. James and the village of Arguri were at once buried beneath the rocks, ice, and torrent of mud which fell from the great chasm above. But as the ice and snow precipitated from the summit gradually melted, the whole mass lost its stability, and about nine o'clock in the morning on the 24th, it began to move with extraordinary rapidity down the mountain towards the Karasu, so that in an incredibly short space of time this stream of rocks and mud spread to a distance of twelve or fourteen miles in the valley of the Araxes. The debris of the trachyte imbibing water formed a blue mud, which poured down in a stream eighty to one hundred feet deep in some places, and seven miles wide. About the 7th of July it ceased to flow, and soon afterwards dried completely.

The result of this fall has been a vast increase in the size of the great chasm, from which the accumulation of rocks and ice, made during ages, have been swept away. The snowy summit of Ararat has sunk considerably, but has not fallen in, as was reported. The white, yellow, and vitreous feldspars, with crystals and pyrites, which seem to form the heart of the mountain, are now fully exposed to view on the upper

walls of the great chasm. Of the monastery of St. James not a vestige remains. The meadows round it, where thirty families of Kurds encamped there at the time perished, are now covered deeply with the deposit of mud. At Arguri some of the dwellings have been cleared by the Kurds seeking for treasures. They are found to be completely filled with mud and rubbish; and, from the condition of the side walls, compared with that of the roofs, it may be concluded that they were overwhelmed and crushed from above.

CHAPTER III.

We will now return to the Professor and his party, whom we left at the then existing Monastery of St. James, contemplating a third attempt to ascend Mount Ararat. A decidedly favourable change having taken place in the weather, the Professor, on the afternoon of the 25th of September, sent to ask Stepan, the peasant of Arguri, if he would join the party, but received from him an answer that he still felt too sore, from the toils of the preceding excursion, to attempt another so soon. But he sent four active peasants, as requested, and also three oxen with a driver for hire. The experience acquired in the former ascents led them to be aware that everything depended on their spending the night as near as possible to the limits of perpetual snow, so as to be able to reach the summit, and return again on the following day; the loads of the cattle, and of the men, were therefore confined to what was absolutely indispensable. The oxen were loaded only with warm clothing, food, and fire-wood, and a small cross, made of bars

two inches in diameter, cut of oak, and so constructed, that the longer piece might serve as a staff to the man who carried it. About noon they again reached the grassy plain, and sent back the horses on which they had ridden. After taking breakfast and resting about an hour and a half, they again proceeded, but finding that the oxen could not get on so fast as themselves, they halted at the foot of a towering pile of stones, over which the poor animals could have scarcely climbed, and freeing them from their loads, distributed the burden fairly between the party, and then sent them back with their keeper. At half-past five o'clock, they had attained a much greater height than on the previous occasion, and were close to the lower border of the snow. The large masses of rock scattered about, sheltered them for the night, but, as they were nearly 14,000 feet above the level of the sea, the cold was very severe. A good fire, and a warm supper, were, therefore, particularly acceptable. "I had some onion broth," says Dr. Parrot, "a dish which I would recommend to all mountain travellers in preference to meat broth, as being extremely warm and invigorating." This refreshment the peasants could not share in, a church holiday compelling them to fast strictly, but they partook of some bread, and a very small portion of brandy. At daybreak they arose, and began

the journey at half-past six, crossed the last broken declivities in half an hour, and entered the boundary of eternal snow. But, in consequence of changes in the temperature of the weather, the new fallen snow, which had facilitated their progress on the former ascent, had melted away, and again frozen, so that, in spite of the still inconsiderable slope, they had to cut steps in the ice. This very much embarrassed the advance, and added greatly to the fatigue. One of the peasants had remained behind at the resting-place, as he complained of illness, and two others now became so exhausted in ascending the glaciers, that they first lay down, and then retreated to the night quarters.

Without being disheartened by these difficulties, they continued their way, and soon reached a great cleft which marks the upper edge of the declivity of the large glacier, and at ten o'clock arrived at the great plain of snow, which marks the first break on the icy head of Ararat. At about the distance of half a mile they saw the cross which they had reared on the 19th of September, but it appeared so extremely small, probably on account of its black colour, that the Professor began to almost doubt whether it could be seen, even with the aid of a telescope, from the plain of the Araxes. In the direction towards the summit, a shorter, but somewhat steeper,

declivity than the past, now lay before them, and between this and the extreme summit there appeared to be only one small hill. After a short rest they passed the first and steepest precipice by hewing out steps in the rocks, and after this the next elevation. But here, instead of seeing the ultimate goal of all their difficulties, immediately before them appeared a series of small hills, which wholly concealed the summit from their view. This, for a moment, rather abated the courage which had hitherto never yielded, and their strength, exhausted by the hard work of cutting steps in the ice, seemed hardly adequate to the attainment of the now invisible object of their wishes. But a review of what had already been accomplished, and of what still remained to be done, invigorated the Professor to banish his fears, and, casting a glance of encouragement at his brave companions, he boldly continued the advance. They crossed two more hills, and the cold breeze of the summit blew towards them. "I stepped," says the Professor, "from behind one of the glaciers, and the extreme cone of Ararat lay distinctly before my enraptured eyes. Only one other icy plain was to be ascended, and at a quarter past three on the 27th of September 1829, we stood on the summit of Mount Ararat."

Having attained this longed for object of his

wishes, the Professor spread his cloak on the snow, and sat down with feelings of deep gratification to enjoy the prospect around him. The summit of the mountain is a slightly convex and almost circular platform, above 200 feet in diameter, from the edges of which there is a steep declivity on all sides, forming the silver crest of Ararat, composed of enduring ice, unbroken by a rock or stone. The view of the valleys and regions around the base of Ararat was obscured by a grey mist, and the hills in the neighbourhood appeared like dark spots no bigger than a man's hand. About thirty feet below the summit, where there was a better chance of its being seen from the valley than on the top, the cross was planted to indicate to all who might accomplish the ascent afterwards, that other steps had preceded theirs. After remaining on the summit about three quarters of an hour, and partaking of a little bread and wine, they rapidly descended, one after another, by means of the deep steps cut in the ice; the sun was getting low, and before they reached the snowy plain of the great cross it had sunk beneath the horizon. It was a magnificent spectacle to observe the dark shadow thrown on the plain by the mountains beneath, mingling gradually until deep darkness encompassed the whole of the valleys, and gradually rising higher and higher on Ararat, whose icy

head was alone illumined by the rays of the setting luminary. Soon this was also covered by the shades of night, and the journey down would have been one of great peril, if the moon had not arisen to throw a clear and lovely light on their footsteps. About half-past six they reached the place of bivouac, where a cheerful fire, and a warm supper refreshed the enterprising travellers. On the ensuing morning they returned in safety to the convent of St. James, where they offered their grateful thanks to Heaven for the success of their perilous enterprise,—not far from the place perhaps where Noah also offered thanks, and "built an altar unto the Lord." After what has been said about the traditionary prejudices of the country, it will scarcely excite surprise that many orthodox Armenians were found ere long to express their disbelief in the successful performance of Professor Parrot's undertaking. And what was scarcely so pardonable, some scientific persons in Europe, after the Professor's return to St. Petersburgh, expressed a similar doubt on the ground of the physical difficulties of the enterprise. To set the question at rest, Dr. Parrot took the trouble to get the oaths of his five companions on the journey taken by a magistrate; and these certifications, if his own word could be justly questioned, are sufficient to put an end to all scepticism on the point. The

very doubts referred to, however, constitute a striking testimony to the obstacles which Professor Parrot overcame in ascending the mount of Ararat, on which the Ark rested.

These three journeys gave the Professor ample means of becoming tolerably acquainted with the geology of the mountain, which he decidedly pronounces to be volcanic. A rich harvest, in a botanical point of view, was not to be expected, partly on account of the dry and rocky character of the country, where even the vegetation of lichens and mosses can hardly obtain a firm hold on the hard masses of lava, and partly on account of the advanced season of the year, when most of the smaller plants were already withered so as to be no longer recognizable. Still whatever plants were to be found on the slopes of the lower region of the mountain, when they had any covering of soil, were observed to possess the distinguishing character of Alpine vegetation. Their stems are either short and strong, or crooked and bent down, while the leaves and flowers are more compact and placed more closely together, than on the same kind of plant in a lower situation. The general reason of this change is, that plants can bear only a certain degree of cold, and since the warmth of the air is derived by radiation from the earth, which is heated by the sun, while the ground on high

mountains is kept at a low temperature by the cooler state of the atmosphere, it is easy to understand that those plants which at the bottom of the mountain grow a foot high, may, on the summit, find, at the height of two inches only above the soil, the limits of temperature which confine their growth. Thus the trees become dwarfish, then the bushes, and so the other plants in proportion to their usual size and their power of living under a ruder climate. But besides this general change of structure in plants at great heights, they also undergo some special alterations with respect to their several parts.

The root ordinarily becomes strong and thick. The flowers are quite perfect in size and every other particular: they unfold on Alpine plants in great luxuriance, and with remarkable freshness of colour; and if a plant be followed on great heights to the very furthest limit at which it grows, it will be found that its flowers are there relatively but little diminished, never deformed, and rather richer, and more dense than usual. On the other hand, the leaves, the cuticle covering the stalk, and, in short, everything green about the plant, dwindles with the increased elevation of the place, and it may be observed that those parts which, on account of their greater strength, seem much more capable of resisting cold than the flowers, are uniformly subjected, as they rise to greater

heights, to a diminution of their vital functions. In the grasses, and other plants with slender leaves, this is less apparent; but it is remarkably striking in every other kind, for the higher up they grow, the smaller the leaves become, until at last, they no longer retain their natural form; they exchange also their pure well-defined green, for an ill-defined light yellow, and get the look of a thin membrane, — all which changes unquestionably arise from the thinness of the atmosphere, from which the leaves are destined to derive their nourishment. These changes were particularly remarked by Professor Parrot during his travels in Caucasus, and on the Swiss and Italian Alps, and were again noticed in the ascent of Mount Ararat. "It was," says he, "peculiarly agreeable to me to find on Ararat, as the highest plant, the same remarkable *Cerastium* which I had formerly gathered on the Kasbeg, in Caucasus, far above the limits of perpetual snow, and to find it with the same singular anomalies of structure." In the same region, 12-13,000 feet above the level of the sea, he found *Saxifraga muscoides*, with numerous flowers, but exceedingly small leaves. The *Aster alpinus* is a lovely ornament of these desolate regions, the leaves small, the stem scarcely half an inch high, but the flowers quite fresh, tolerably large, and of a beautiful violet colour. In company with it are the

Aster pulchellus, with its tufts of lilac blossoms, and other flowers which the Professor had observed on the heights of Caucasus. In the lower region, about 7-8000 feet above the sea the *Juniperus oxycedrus*, and the *Cotoneaster* ripen their fruit. That walnut-trees, apricots, willows, and Italian poplars (these last of diminished size) can still grow well at the height of 6000 feet above the sea, provided they find soil and moisture, is proved by their being found at the monastery of St. James. That birches also, though no longer straight and tall, are yet not overpowered by the climate at the height of 7800 feet, is proved by the wood at the foot of Little Ararat. Sir Robert Ker Porter says, that in the second division of Ararat, tigers and crows abound. Tournefort, also, says that the middle region, and even the borders of the snow limit, are inhabited by tigers; that he saw them within seven hundred yards of him, and that he and his people threw themselves on the ground for the sake of concealment, while the tigers passed by. He adds that the young ones are caught in traps by the people round the mountain, to be exhibited in shows of wild beasts throughout Persia; but the Professor makes no mention of these denizens of the wild. In the approach to Ararat, while his companion was making a sketch of their first view of the mountain from the Blackwater, a

little stream in the plain of the Araxes, the Professor observed a number of cochineal insects, some of which were creeping about on the dry sand and short grass, but the greater part were collected together in large nests, round the roots of a short hard species of grass, the *Dactylis littoralis*, which grows in great abundance in the vicinity. He speaks of this discovery as being one which might, under proper management, become a source of profitable occupation to these provinces, which we understand is now the case. The value of these insects is well understood in Persia, where they are used very generally for dyeing scarlet, as they are, in fact, through every part of the East. The scarlet dye employed in Europe, is produced from the American cochineal insect, which lives upon several species of cactus, whence it derives its name of *Coccus cacti:* the Persian insect, the *Coccus Polonicus*, is somewhat different; it takes its name from being produced in Poland, from whence great quantities were obtained before the discovery of America. The male is a winged insect, and is never used in dyeing; the female is roundish, about the size of the kernel of a cherry, provided with very short legs for creeping. It is quite soft, like a berry, and of the finest dark amaranth colour, throughout. When dried, it shrivels up to the size of a grain of millet, and becomes covered

with a bluish mould. The true scarlet colour is produced by infusion, with the addition of acids, and the purple by a solution of potash. The nest, which the Professor found imbedded among the roots of the grass, consisted of three, four, ten, or twenty very hard cells, formed of a paper-like material, to suit the size of the animal, and irregularly arranged against each other. In the winter the insect falls into the chrysalis state, and the young ones make their appearance from the nests in the spring. The Professor made a report of this discovery to the Commander-in-chief of Erivan, and presented him with some specimens of the plants and insects.

In 1834 an ascent of Mount Ararat, in the middle of August, was accomplished by a Mr. Autonomoff, a young man holding an office in Armenia, who was induced to make the attempt partly to satisfy his own curiosity, and partly out of regard for the reputation of Professor Parrot; whose having actually reached the summit of the mountain is still obstinately denied by the then inmates of the convent, who fancied that the truth would lower the sanctity of their mountain in the opinion of the people. Mr. Autonomoff succeeded in reaching the summit; the large cross set up by the Professor was nearly covered with snow; the smaller cross planted on

the summit was not to be found, and was probably buried in the snow. One of his guides, who had also accompanied the Professor, showed him the spot where it had been set up. He asked some persons to look while he was at the top, and try if they could see him. On his coming down, however, nobody would admit having seen him there; they all affirmed that to reach the summit was impossible, and though he and his guides agreed, the magistrates of the village refused not only to give him a certificate of his having ascended the mountain, but even of his guides having declared that he had done so. These very doubts, however, constitute a striking testimony to the obstacles which these enterprising travellers overcame in ascending the mountain of Ararat "on which the Ark rested."

CHAPTER IV.

BASHAN AND GILEAD.

An open country equally divided by the river Jarmuk, contains the famous pasture lands of Argob and part of Bashan. Beyond this district the mountains rise again, and increase in altitude and breadth, as they traverse, or rather fill the country of Gilead to, and beyond, the river Jabbok. The precise limits of the land of Gilead, cannot be clearly defined on any data which the Scriptures offer. We know that it lay south of Bashan, and north of Moab, but from this, although we may gather, well enough in a general way, the situation of the district, we are not thereby assisted to the knowledge of its precise limits, as the boundaries of Bashan and Moab are as uncertain as those of Gilead, and under the name of Bashan the district to which the name of Gilead properly belongs is frequently included. The land of Gilead is more mountainous than that of Bashan, and in the more south-

BASHAN

ern parts the mountains are of a considerable height. In the northern part this district is least interesting, in the central and eastern parts it is the most picturesque, and in the southern the most grand. Another Gilead is mentioned in Scripture, on the western side of the Jordan; it is that on which Gideon assembled the forces with which he defeated the Midianites. It is uncertain which is the hill so called, but it is thought to have been not far from Gilboa.

The riches of the pasture land of Bashan, and the consequent superiority of its breed of cattle are frequently alluded to in the Scriptures; the oaks are also mentioned in connection with the cedars of Lebanon, and in Ezekiel's description of the wealth and magnificence of Tyre, it is said "of the oaks of Bashan have they made their oars." The country took its name Bashan from its fertile soil; the word Bashan meaning "fruitful hill;" and, besides other wonders of nature, produced men of such uncommon stature that it was called the land of giants. Its fertile plains are intersected by basaltic ridges, which are prolongations of the Anti-Libanus, the mountains of which, being higher than Zion, are alluded to in the 28th Psalm. It appears from various ruins that the towns of Bashan were chiefly built on heights, and modern travellers still bear witness to the extreme fertility and beauty of the land. Bucking-

ham, who, in travelling through Palestine, wore the dress and spoke the language of the Arabs, by these means commanded a free intercourse with the people of the country. This enabled him to obtain information, and to make observations, which would have been otherwise inaccessible, and he considers the lands of Bashan and Gilead as among the most interesting parts of the countries visited in his travels. "Independently," he remarks "of the high interest which this portion of the Jewish possessions cannot fail to excite in the minds of all those for whom the illustration of scriptural topography and sacred history have any charms, its importance as the seat of ten Roman cities, giving the name of Decapolis to the region in which they were seated, must rouse the curiosity of the scholar to know something of their present state. The positions established here, of some among the threescore cities of Og, the King of Bashan, in the mountains of Gilead, will gratify the biblical inquirer; the ruins of some of the chief cities of the Decapolis will furnish food for the antiquarian; and the Greek inscriptions amidst these ruins will be interesting to the classical student and the man of letters." From these researches, well worthy the attention Mr. Buckingham solicits for them, we can only select descriptions immediately connected with our present subject, the mountains of Bashan and Gilead. In cross-

ing these, Mr. Buckingham remarks, that the character of the country was quite different from anything he had seen in Palestine. "We were now in a land of extraordinary richness, abounding with the most beautiful prospects, clothed with thick forests, varied with verdant slopes, and possessing extensive plains of a fine red soil, now covered with thistles, as the best proof of its fertility, and yielding in nothing to the celebrated plains of Esdraelon and Zabulon in Galilee and Samaria. We continued our way through a country, the beauty of which so surprised us that we often asked each other what were our sensations, as if to ascertain the reality of what we saw, and persuade each other by mutual confessions of our delight, that the picture before us was not an optical delusion. The landscape alone, which varied at every turn and gave us new beauties from every different point of view, was, of itself, worth all the pains of an excursion to the eastward of Jordan to obtain a sight of, and the park-like scenes that sometimes softened the romantic wildness of the general character as a whole, reminded us of similar spots in less neglected lands. It was about noon when we reached a small encampment of Arabs, who had pitched their tents in a most luxuriant dell, where their flocks fed on the young buds of spring, and where they obtained for themselves an abundant supply

of wood and water. After smoking a pipe, and taking coffee with the Arabs, we quitted them about one, and soon after saw a smaller party, consisting of about a dozen families only, halting to pitch their tents in a beautiful little hollow basin, which they had chosen for their place of encampment, surrounded on three sides by wooded hills. The Sheikh rode, while the rest of the men walked, as did also most of the women; the boys drove the flocks of sheep and goats, and the little children the young lambs; the kids and the poultry were all carried in panniers, or baskets, across the camels' backs. The tents, with their cordage and the mats, the cooking utensils, the provisions and furniture, were likewise laden upon these useful animals. As these halted at every five steps to pull a mouthful of leaves from the bushes, the progress of their march was very slow; but the patience of all seemed quite in harmony with the tardy movement of the camel, and it was evidently a matter of indifference to every one of the group, whether they halted at noon or sunset, since an hour was time enough for them to prepare their shelter for the night. The camels are mostly of a whitish colour, and in ascending the banks of the Jordan we met large flocks of them, all of which were young and had never been burdened, as our guides assured us, though the whole number of those we saw could not have been less than

a thousand. These were being driven down to the Jordan to drink, chiefly under the care of young women and boys. Among them, many of the young ones were clothed around their bodies with coverings of hair-tent cloth, while the elder females had their udders bound up in bags, tied by cords crossing over the loins, and the males walked with two of the legs tied."

These wandering tribes, some of whom exclusively live on the produce of their flocks and herds, while others cultivate some small spots of ground, and yet principally derive their subsistence from their cattle, and consequently are obliged to change their abode, abound in every tract in Syria. It appears to be the effect of the character of the country in which two districts are generally found contiguous to one another, one of which affords pasture in winter, and is barren in summer, while the other yields pasture in summer and cannot be pastured with advantage in winter. This obliges those who have large flocks and herds to a continual change of abode. But this state of things is very destructive to agriculture, under a weak and distracted government, like the Turkish of the present day. These wandering tribes are difficult to keep in order, and they soon inspire the peaceful husbandman with such a dread of their depredations, that he gladly pays them a tribute on condition of their

not laying waste his fields, and carrying off his cattle. Burckhardt observes, that the tax which the agriculturists of the Haouran pay to the wandering tribes dispersed among them, is much heavier than all the taxes imposed by government and their own chiefs; and this is the reason why so fertile a country, which yields twenty-five fold, is nearly a desert. Those of the tribes who never cultivate the ground wander about in the Syrian and Arabian deserts, where they pass the winter, which lasts from the beginning of October to the end of April, when the rain causes grass and herbs to spring up in many parts of the desert, on which their flocks feed; but they enter the limits of Syria at the beginning of May, and remain there until after September. At this time they approach the caravan roads leading from Aleppo to Damascus and Mecca. They come to these places for a twofold purpose, water and pasture for their cattle during summer, and to exchange their cattle for corn as winter provisions. If they are at peace with the Pacha of Damascus, they encamp quietly among the villages near the springs and wells.

The following description, given by Mr. Parsons, of the movement of a more numerous Arab horde, is extremely illustrative of patriarchal manners. "It was," he says, "entertaining enough to see the horde of Arabs decamp, as nothing

could be more regular. First went the sheep and goat-herds, each with their flocks in divisions, according as the chief of each family directed; then followed the camels and asses, loaded with the tents, furniture, and kitchen utensils; these were followed by the old men, women, boys, and girls on foot. The children that cannot walk are carried on the backs of the young women, or the boys and girls: and the smallest of the lambs and kids are carried under the arms of the children. To each tent belong many dogs, among which are some greyhounds; some have from ten to fourteen dogs, and from twenty to thirty men, women and children, belonging to it. The procession is closed by the chief of the tribe, whom they call Emir, and Father (emir means prince), mounted on the very best horse, and surrounded by the heads of each family, all on horses, with many servants on foot. Between each family is a division or space of 100 yards, or more, when they migrate; and such great regularity is observed, that neither camels, asses, sheep, nor dogs mix, but each keeps to the division to which it belongs without the least trouble. They had been here eight days, and were going four hours' journey towards the north-west, to another spring of water. This tribe consisted of about 850 men, women and children: their flocks of sheep, and goats were about 5000, besides a great number

of camels, horses, and asses. Horses and greyhounds they breed and train up for sale; they neither kill nor sell their ewe lambs. At set times a chapter in the Koran is read by the chief of each family, either in, or near each tent, the whole family being gathered round, and very attentive." "This wandering life, without ambition," says a French traveller, "brings to the mind of the traveller that of the ancient patriarchs. Nothing is more interesting than their manner of changing their abode, and finding their homes, their hearths, and their country in every place." Dr. Russell states that the people of Aleppo are supplied with the greatest part of their butter, their cheese, and their cattle for slaughter, by the tribes of wandering Arabs, and that the patriarchs doubtless supplied the ancient cities of Canaan in like manner. Hamor speaks expressly of their trading with his people. "No people," says Burckhardt, "equal the Bedouins in numerical exaggeration. Ask a Bedouin who belongs to a tribe of 300 tents, of the number of his brethren, and he will take a handful of sand, and cast it up in the air, or point to the stars and tell you that they are as numberless;" we quote this passage merely as it affords a remarkable parallel to the comparison by which the number of the posterity of Abraham is promised.

We will now return to Mr. Buckingham's party

who continued their progress, passing by gradual ascents over still more beautiful and luxuriant grounds than those which they had reached before, and in three hours arrived at a high plain, leading to a deep ravine, apparently a convulsion of nature, which had in this place separated the hill. The height of the cliffs on either side, which were nearly perpendicular, was not less than 500 feet, while the breadth, from cliff to cliff, was not more than 100 yards. The plains at the top, on both sides, were covered with a light red soil, and bore marks of high fertility; but the dark sides of the rocky cliffs that faced each other in the hollow chasm were, in general, destitute of verdure. "We descended," says Mr. Buckingham, "into the ravine by winding paths, since it was everywhere too steep to go directly down, and found at the bottom of it, a small river, which flowed from the eastward, appearing here to have just made a sharp bend from the northward, and from this point to go nearly west, to discharge itself into the Jordan. The banks of this stream were so thickly wooded with oleanders and plane-trees, wild olives, and wild almonds in blossom, pink and white cyclamen flowers, and others, the names of which were unknown to us, with tall and waving reeds, at least fifteen feet in height, that we could not perceive the waters through them from above, though the presence of these luxuriant borders

marked the winding of its course, and the murmur of its flow was echoed through its long deep channel, so as to be heard distinctly from afar. Close thickets are also to be met with all along the edge of the Jordan, which would afford ample shelter for wild beasts; and as the Jordan might overflow its banks, when swollen by rains sufficiently to inundate the lower plain, though it could never reach the upper one, it was most probably from these that the lions were driven out by the inundation, which gave rise to the simile of the Prophet Jeremiah.* Mr. Thomson also tells us that the banks of the river Jordan are so covered with tamarisks, willows, and other trees and bushes, that it requires some pains to make way through them, and come at a sight of the waters; these woods are said to be a covert for lions, and other beasts of prey, which are driven out at the overflowing of the river. "At the side of the stream," continues Mr. Buckingham, "near the spot where we forded it, was a piece of wall, solidly built upon the inclined slope, constructed in an uniform manner, though of small stones, and apparently finished at the end which was towards the river, so that it never could have been carried across, as we at first supposed, either for a bridge, or to close the pass. This was called by the Arabs,

* He shall come up like a lion, from the swelling of Jordan.—Jer. xlix. 19.

'the work of the sons of Israel,' but they knew of no other traditions regarding it. The river where we crossed it, at this point, was not more than ten yards wide, but as it was deeper than the Jordan, and nearly as rapid, we had some difficulty in fording it. As it ran in a rocky bed, the waters were clear, and we found the taste agreeable. This stream is called the river of Zerkah by the Arabs, from the name of the nearest place, which we had just passed through before coming here. From its position, there can be no doubt that it is the Jabbok of the Scriptures, which was the northern boundary of the Amorites, as the stream of Arnon was their southern one; and this northern border, from its character, fully justifies the assertion of its strength. Josephus, in describing the geographical boundaries of the country of the Amorites, says, 'This is a country situated between three rivers, and naturally resembling an island, the river Arnon being its southern limit, the river Jabbok determining its north side, which, running into the Jordan, loses its own name, and takes the other, while Jordan itself runs along by it on its western coast.'"

This is in perfect unison with the boundaries so frequently mentioned in holy writ, and more particularly in Jephthah's recapitulation of the wars of the Israelites, when he sends messages

to the king of the children of Ammon, wherein he says of the former, "and they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan." This is the same place with Peniel, where Jacob wrestled with an angel. As it was here too, that his name was first changed from Jacob to Israel, because as a prince he had power with God and with men had prevailed, it is not impossible but that the singular building of the sloping wall below, might bear the name of Beni Israel, in allusion to the event, by the people of the country, and be thought even to be a monument commemorative of it. "We ascended the steep on the north side of the Zerkah, and, on reaching its summit, came again on the beautiful plain, of an elevated level, and still covered with a very rich soil. We had now quitted the land of Sihon, King of the Amorites, and entered into that of Og, the King of Bashan. The mountains here are called the land of Gilead in the Scriptures and in Josephus; and, according to the Roman division, this was the country of the Decapolis, so often spoken of in the New Testament, or the province of Gaulonitis, from the city of Gaulon, its early capital.

"We pursued our way over this celebrated tract, continuing to view, with surprise and admiration, the beautiful country that surrounded us; its

plains covered with a fertile soil, its hills clothed with forests, at every new turn presenting the most magnificent landscapes that could be imagined. Among the trees, the oak was frequently seen, and we know that this territory produced them of old. The expression of the fat bulls of Bashan, which occurs more than once in the Scriptures, seemed to us inconsistent, as applied to the beasts of a country generally thought to be a desert, in common with the whole tract which is laid down in our modern maps as such, between the Jordan and the Euphrates; but we could now fully comprehend, not only that the bulls of this luxuriant country might be proverbially fat, but that its possessors too might be a race renowned for strength and comeliness of person." The tribes of Reuben and Gad possessed a multitude of cattle, and the children of Israel entreated Moses not to take them over Jordan, but to give them this land for their portion, as it was a land of rich pastures. "As we continued to advance," says Mr. Buckingham, "on a general course to the north-east, we came into cultivated lands, sown with corn, the young blades of which were already appearing above the earth, from their having had gentle showers on the mountains, while all the country west of the Jordan was parched with drought. The general face of this region improved as we advanced farther in it, and

every new direction of our path opened upon us views which surprised and charmed us by their grandeur and beauty. Lofty mountains gave an outline of the most magnificent character; flowing beds of secondary hills softened the romantic wildness of the picture; gentle slopes, clothed with wood, gave a rich variety of tints, hardly to be imitated by the pencil; deep valleys, filled with murmuring streams and verdant meadows, offered all the luxuries of cultivation; and herds and flocks gave life and animation to scenes as grand, as beautiful, and as highly picturesque as the genius of a Claude could either invent or desire."

"It was about four o'clock," continues Mr. Buckingham, "when we reached the village of Boorza, which is seated on the brow of a hill towards the south-east, commanding before it, in that direction, a prospect which no language can adequately describe. It appeared to contain from forty to fifty dwellings of stone, and we learnt that the whole of the inhabitants were nominally Mohammedans, though they have among them neither mosque nor priest, nor do they trouble themselves about religion, any further than to maintain its public profession. The ruins of an old castle on an eminence, which occupied a commanding position, proved this place to have been anciently a post of defence. It was strongly constructed of stone and in a square form. This

village Mr. Buckingham considers to have been the city of Bosor, in the land of Gilead, mentioned in the Maccabees, as the one which Judas Maccabeus and his brother Jonathan, after travelling three days over Jordan, "took and burnt." What is there called the garrison in which the Jews were shut up, may most probably be the identical ruined citadel now to be seen on the adjacent hill." "About an hour's distance from Boorza," Mr. Buckingham continues, "we passed a large ruined building called the convent of Ramza, and on the side of a hill, the ruins of a city of that name, most probably the ancient one of refuge, Ramoth in Gilead. This city was so called to distinguish it from other towns of the same name, and is first mentioned as one of the cities of refuge set apart by Moses on the east of the Jordan. On an opposite hill stand the ruins of what is supposed to be Jabesh Gilead, the scene of a battle between Saul and the Ammonites, in which the latter were discomfited. Nahash, the leader of the Ammonites, had come up to encamp against this place, and on being asked to make a covenant, urged the strange condition of his being allowed to thrust out the right eyes of all the people, which the men of Jabesh requested seven days to consider of, during which time, Saul came to their aid, and repelled their enemies. At a future period, as is well known,

these men of Jabesh testified their gratitude by rescuing the bodies of the king and his sons from the hands of the Philistines, and burning them at Jabesh; they then took their bones, buried them under a tree, and fasted seven days." Mr. Buckingham was led by careful inquiry and observations to come to a conclusion on these two points of interest, and as the early writers were rather historians than geographers, they afford, in instances where these two cities are mentioned, such scanty materials for fixing the position of places spoken of by them, that great accuracy must not be expected to be attained at this period. The resemblance of names, the correspondence of local features, and the existence of ruins on any particular spot, may be therefore considered as of as much weight in determining questions of this nature, as the estimate of distances, which from being given in numbers, are always liable to corruption. But when, as in Mr. Buckingham's researches, all these circumstance nearly agree, the evidence may be received as the most conclusive now within our reach. "We continued our way," says Mr. Buckingham, "from between the ruins of these two ancient cities, still towards the north-east, admiring, as before, the beauty of the country on all sides," yet distinguished for its rich pastures and aromatic simples; from which latter different sorts of balsam are still distilled.

"The prospects around us made us credit all that has been said of the ancient populousness of this district; and while we felt the difficulty in many instances of identifying ancient positions with the perfect correspondence of all the requisite data, we conceived it highly probable that one place might be sometimes taken for another, in a kingdom of so confined an extent, yet so thickly spread over with populous towns and villages, and in which are said to have existed threescore great cities, with walls and brazen bars." A recent traveller describes in terms as glowing as those of Mr. Buckingham, the verdant character of these lands, and speaks of having met with many flocks of sheep and goats, which were feeding by the way; the long curling hair of the latter was of a beautiful glossy black, showing us at once the beauty and propriety of the description in the sacred song, "My hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilead." In passing through a large flock of sheep, he remarked how familiar they appeared with the shepherd, showing no signs of timidity at his closest approach. Their large heavy tails are also very remarkable; these are composed chiefly of fat, are esteemed a great dainty from their marrow-like sweetness, and are particularly referred to in the Mosaic law, as the pieces that were to feed the flame of sacrifice.

CHAPTER V.

THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES.

THE hill which bears this name, is of too little geographical consequence to claim a place where the principal mountains alone are professed to be noticed; but its celebrity as the supposed hill on which the Sermon on the Mount was delivered, will not permit us to pass it altogether without mention. It is about thirteen miles to the south of Safet, the road from which descends for two hours, and then crosses several of the other mountains of Upper Galilee, before it arrives at the foot of this mountain, which, with two projecting summits on one of its extremities, bears some resemblance to the back of a camel. By the Arabs it is called the Horns of Hotein, from a village near at hand. It is in itself low, although the plain on which it stands is of considerable elevation, and commands a beautiful prospect.

"In front," says Mr. Elliot, "there are several

ranges of hills, rising one above another; the mountains of upper and lower Galilee, and the city of Safet, elevated above all, like a sentinel on a post of observation; on the left is Tabor, on the north-west is the long high range of Lebanon, and on the right the sea of Tiberias, with the hills of Ituræa and Gaulonitis." And with reference to Safet, as the city to which our Saviour is supposed to have directed attention from the Mount of Beatitudes, the same traveller observes, —"Such is the height of Safet, that from every point where it is seen, it cannot fail to form the most remarkable feature in the landscape; and if the position assigned to our Lord, when delivering his unparalleled discourse, be correct, Bethulia, the ancient Safet, rose in unrivalled majesty immediately before Him."

"If," says a late writer, "the traveller seeks on the northern shores of the lake of Gennesareth, for the ruins of Capernaum, that city once 'exalted unto heaven,' but now utterly 'cast down,' and pauses in his search to survey the mountains by which the lake is enclosed, he observes to the north of him hill rising above hill, in beauteous succession, and that the loftiest visible eminence is crowned by a castellated city, whose commanding situation is, perhaps, unrivalled in the world. If this strange prospect tempts his feet to the ascent, he is surprised to find the task less arduous

than he had anticipated. Gradually one mountain after another is left below, and at last he arrives at a pyramidal hill, which overtops them all, and on the extreme summit of which the city stands. It now bears the name of Safet, and is thought to represent the Bethulia of which so much mention is made in the book of Judith; and it is also, with very sufficient probability, supposed to be that city to which our blessed Lord, in his Sermon on the Mount, directed the attention of his hearers, when he reminded them that 'a city set on a hill cannot be hid.' The elevation of the mountain attracts the clouds, and at Safet rains are frequent."

Mr. Carne tells us, that in the way to Tiberias, his party entered a long and rich valley, in which they halted for an hour at mid-day. At a few miles distance is shown the field where the disciples plucked and ate the ears of corn; and within three miles of the town, turning out of the path for a short distance, on the left, they came to the Mount of Beatitudes, where our Saviour preached His sermon. It is a low verdant hill, rising gradually on every side, towards the summit, on which small masses of oak are scattered, and is admirably calculated for the purpose, as a multitude of people might stand on the gently sloping sides of the mount, even to the bottom, and hear distinctly every word of the speaker. The pro-

spect of the lake beneath, of the mountains of Gilboa, and that of Bethulia, to the north, is extremely beautiful.

Behind the hills which bound the lake of Gennesareth on the west, there are some valleys which tradition indicates as the scenes of some of the transactions in the history of our blessed Lord, which certainly must have occurred somewhere in the neighbourhood. One of these is that in which Christ is supposed to have multiplied the seven loaves and fishes. This valley is long, and of moderate width, with green and abundant grass, and well capable of containing, seated thereon, a great number of people. The hill on which our Lord is alleged to have stood, when he blessed the loaves and fishes, is of less height than some of those on the opposite side of the valley. It bears the odd name of the table of multiplication, according to Nau, who, with his party, sat down and ate a commemorative morsel of bread on the spot. From the top of this hill is visible the Mount of Beatitudes, which stands detached in the midst of an extensive plain, greatly elevated above the level of the Jordan, from which cause even the low summits, found here, command extensive prospects in different directions.

When Dr. Clarke visited this part of the country, he remarked a number of wild animals;

antelopes, especially, were very numerous, and he had the gratification of seeing these beautiful quadrupeds in the natural state, either feeding among the thistles and tall herbage of the plains, or bounding gracefully along as they were disturbed from their pastures.

The Arabs are very fond of these graceful little animals, and frequently tame them as pets, of whom the children become especially fond. Mr. Parsons gives us a touching instance of this in the following anecdote:—

"A little Arab girl, brought a young antelope to sell, and it was bought by a Greek merchant, whose tent was next to mine, for half a piastre. She had bored both ears, into each of which she had inserted two small pieces of red silk ribbon. She told the purchaser, that, as it could run about, and lap milk, he might be able to rear it up; and that she should not have sold it, but that she wanted money to buy a ribbon, which her mother would not afford her; then almost smothering the little animal with kisses, she delivered it, with tears in her eyes, and ran away. The merchant ordered it to be killed and drest for supper. In the close of the evening the girl came to take a last farewell of her little pet, knowing that we were to decamp at daybreak. When she was told it was killed, she seemed much surprised, saying it was impossible that any-

body could be so cruel as to kill such a pretty creature. On its being shown to her with its throat cut, she burst into tears, threw the money in the man's face, and ran away, crying."

To hunt this antelope is a favourite amusement in the East; but, from its extraordinary swiftness, it is one attended with great difficulty. On the first alarm, the antelope flies like an arrow from the bow, and leaves the best-mounted hunter and the fleetest greyhound far behind. The sportsman is obliged to call in the aid of the falcon, trained to the work, to seize on the animal and impede its motions, and thus give the dogs time to overtake it.

CHAPTER VI.

MOUNT CALVARY.

One of the first objects in Jerusalem, which attracts the attention of the pilgrim or the traveller, is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a building which was designed to comprise the spot where our blessed Lord suffered, and the tomb in which he was afterwards laid. The building is less than one hundred paces long, and not more than sixty wide, and yet is so contrived, that it is supposed to contain under its roof twelve or thirteen sanctuaries or places consecrated to a more than ordinary veneration, as being connected with the last scenes of our blessed Saviour's life.

Although not called a mount in Scripture, the rock of Calvary was a rising ground, and selected on this account as a place for the execution of criminals, and though once without the gates, is now in the middle of Jerusalem.

This change has arisen from the altered form

of the modern city, compared with its ancient elevation, and access to the church is now also difficult from its being surrounded by buildings, which at various periods have been run up against it.

The Hebrew name Calvary, as well as Golgotha, implies the place of a skull, and the Via Dolorosa (Street of Grief) derives its appellation from its being the supposed site of the street through which the chief priests and elders of the Jews, after binding our blessed Lord, led him away to deliver him to Pontius Pilate. The Street of Grief rises with a gradual ascent, becoming narrower towards Calvary, where it terminates; but this road is now in such a state of ruin that it is very difficult to pass through it.

The Empress Helena of Rome, in the fourth century, erected the first church over the rock of Calvary. Early in the seventh century, Jerusalem was taken by the Persians, a large part of the city destroyed, many thousands of the inhabitants slain, and the splendid Church of the Holy Sepulchre was burnt. In a few years the city was restored, and the church rebuilt. Previous to the year 1685, the Roman Catholics, or Latins, as they are here styled, were in undisturbed possession of the church, and enjoyed the exclusive right of performing every act of devotion within its walls. The Greeks of the

Oriental church then invaded their privileges, and the most violent commotions have at times taken place in consequence. On the 12th of March, 1808, a great portion of the edifice was again destroyed by fire. The present building was commenced immediately afterwards, and finished in 1810. It happened that at the time of the conflagration, the funds of the Terra Santa were very low, and that, at the same epoch, the attention of the Church of Rome was otherwise engaged, and the devotional fervour of Christians in Europe (according to the report of the monks) was somewhat relaxed. The consequence was, that the Greeks, backed by their co-religionists the Russians, having offered to defray the expenses of reconstruction, were put in possession of what are esteemed the most valuable parts of the edifice. Here then, that mortal antipathy, which unhappily every where exists between the members of the two communions, breaks out into actual warfare, giving rise to scenes lamentable to the cause and interests of religion. In laying the foundation of the church built by the Empress Helena, much of the rock was hewn away, and parts too low were supplied with strong arches; these, with many of the splendid marble pillars that supported the roof, still remain. The church is entered from the south, where there is an open paved court,

presenting to view a large portion of the sacred edifice. Here a considerable traffic is carried on in crucifixes, carved shells, beads and chaplets, the vendors sitting on the ground beside their wares. A gateway formed of two pointed arches of Gothic or Saracenic architecture, faces the court, and originally formed, no doubt, a lateral entrance. One of the doors has been walled up. The existing one is formed of massive materials, and has a small aperture in it, to communicate with visitors from without. Over the doorway is a narrow frieze in low relief, representing the triumphant entry of our Saviour into Jerusalem. To the left of it is a high tower, anciently the belfry. The whole edifice is crowned by a handsome cupola, which is distinguishable from most parts of the town. "The church," says Mr. Robinson, "when opened to the public, is guarded by Turks, who sit on a raised divan, spread with mats and cushions within the walls, and exact a small tribute from all who enter. There is nothing remarkable in the architecture or decorations of the building either externally or internally, it being necessarily irregular in its form, from an attempt to bring under one roof the various places it comprehends. But once ushered within the walls, the doors shut upon us, and our voices softened down into a whisper, we felt ourselves impressed with the reverential awe due to

the sacredness of the place. Our attention was first directed to a slab of polished marble, on the floor of the entrance hall, said to cover the "stone of unction," on which the body of our Lord was washed, anointed, and prepared for the tomb. It is surrounded by a low rail, and several rich lamps are suspended over it. Advancing a few paces to the left, we came into that part of the church properly denominated the nave. It is an open space in the form of a circle, about thirty-five paces in diameter, and surrounded by sixteen pillars supporting galleries, and covered in by a dome, not unlike that of the Pantheon at Rome. In the centre of this area, and immediately under the aperture, through which the light is admitted rises a small oblong building of marble, twenty feet in length, by ten in breadth, and about fifteen feet in height, surmounted by a small cupola standing upon columns. This covers the supposed site of our Lord's tomb. It is approached by steps leading into an anteroom or chapel. Taking off our turbans and shoes, at the desire of the Dragoman who attended us (some pilgrims advance on their knees), we entered the sacred adytum. In the outer chapel we noticed a block of polished marble about a foot and a half square. It marks the spot where the angel stood who announced the tidings of the resurrection to the pious women. Stooping down to pass

under a low narrow door, across which a curtain is drawn, we entered the sanctuary or sepulchral chamber. To the right is an altar erected over the 'new sepulchre,' where according to ancient tradition, the body of our Redeemer was deposited by Nicodemus, after he had taken it down from the cross. Above it a vast quantity of lamps, gold and silver, the gifts of Christian potentates, are suspended, and kept constantly burning. The walls are cased in marble of a darkish hue, and the roof is much blackened by the smoke of the lamps. The space before the altar is very confined, not admitting of more than from three to four visitors at a time. After remaining for some minutes on our knees, contemplating the mysteries of the redemption, which were concluded on this hallowed spot, we withdrew and entered the choir of the church, facing the entrance of the sepulchre and running towards the east. Although these different sanctuaries and altars may be visited by Christians of all nations for private devotions, none but the sect to whom it has been particularly assigned by the authorities is at liberty to exercise there any public office of religion."

It is not therefore to be wondered at, that the several portions of the church, as well as the relics it contains, should have become objects of contention between them. As they are to be pur-

chased from the Turkish authorities, the highest bidder becomes the possessor. During the holy week numbers of pilgrims, from the Romish and Greek churches, flock to this spot, and it is, says Mr. Elliott, "when both parties require access to the tomb at the same time that the most disgraceful scenes are witnessed. The church is then crowded to excess by pilgrims, all anxious to obtain the best places, and scuffling for them without shame or awe, so that women and children, and even men, are often killed. But accidents constitute the least melancholy part of the drama. With or without provocation, the opposite parties, animated by religious hate, and impelled by their priests, proceed to blows, the hallowed shrine is stained with the blood of murderers and the murdered; the Turkish soldiers are forced to interfere, and drag violently from the fray Christian combatants, nay, Christian priests, wielding their bludgeons over the sepulchre of the Prince of Peace! Could anything rival the horror of the scene it would be that, inspired by the conduct of the Turks themselves. Accustomed to regard Christians as dogs, and to detest them as idolaters; too long habituated to the riots and murders of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and justly considering the pilgrims and priests who figure there, as among the most foolish and degraded of their race, the indignities they inflict

on them know no bounds. If a Turk of rank or a Frank gentleman wish to pass through the crowd an attendant will precede him with a stick, dealing his blows right and left with a mercilessness which makes the beholder shudder; and the priests at the very altar crouch and bleed under the strokes of the infidel." On the eve of the Greek Easter-day the ceremony of receiving the holy fire is performed in their chapel. This fire, it is pretended, bursts forth in a supernatural manner, and the pilgrims of the Greek communion light their torches at it, believing that they receive it from Heaven.

A chapel on the north side is called that of the Apparition, in commemoration of our Saviour having appeared after his resurrection to console Mary Magdalen. It is in the exclusive possession of the Latin friars, the entrance to whose apartment is from a door on the left hand. There is none from without; consequently, though nominally guardians of the sepulchre, they are in fact themselves prisoners at the discretion of the real keepers, who are the Turks. They have likewise an organ, a source of much annoyance to their neighbours the Greeks, in whose service all musical instruments are interdicted. Besides the centre altar, on the left hand, is a smaller one, dedicated to the holy cross; other altars commemorate the scourging of our blessed Lord, the

place where He was confined whilst preparations were making for His crucifixion, and that, where the soldiers cast lots for His garments. A flight of about thirty steps leads to a subterranean chapel, called after St. Helena; it is wholly without ornament; and from thence a further descent of eleven steps conducts to a rocky humid cavity, where the three crosses are reported to have been found by the above-named Empress. It was subsequent to this discovery, that she built the magnificent fabric, of which we now see the remains.

The daily employment of the recluses inhabiting the sacred edifice is, to trim the lamps, and to make devotional visits and processions to the several sanctuaries in the church. Thus they spend their time, many of them for four or six years together, some for their whole lives.

CHAPTER VII.

CARMEL.

MOUNT CARMEL constitutes a remarkable feature in the western border of the land of Canaan, near the sea-coast. It is a range of hills, about six miles in length, extending south-west from the plain of Esdraelon, and ending in a promontory, or cape, which forms one side of the bay of Acre, and is the only great promontory upon the coast of Palestine. The two extremities on the western side towards the sea, jut out in the form of a bow.

In height, Mount Carmel is about 1500 feet, and at its foot on the south runs the brook Kishon, a little further north the river Belus. The base of the northern portion approaches the water very closely, so that when seen from the hills north-east of Acre, the mountain appears to rise directly out of the Western sea; but further north it retires more inland, leaving, between the mountain and the sea, an extensive plain.

Mount Carmel well deserves its Hebrew name,

(country of vineyards and gardens) for although the statements of travellers vary in the accounts of its fertility, yet this, it is well known, is owing to the different times of the year at which the place was visited. Those who were on Carmel in the spring, or early summer, found the mountain covered with verdure, while those whose visit was later in the season, found everything less flourishing. Mariti, who was one of the former, describes it as a delightful region, and says, that the good quality of its soil is apparent from the fact, that many odoriferous plants and flowers, as hyacinths, jonquils, anemones, &c., grow wild upon the mountain; and another traveller tells us that Mount Carmel is entirely covered with verdure. On its summit are pines and oaks, further down olive and laurel trees, and everywhere it is plentifully watered. It gives rise to a multitude of brooks, the largest of which rises from the so-called fountain of Elijah; and they all hurry along between banks overgrown with bushes, to the river Kishon. Every species of tillage succeeds here admirably under this mild and cheerful sky. The prospect from the summit is enchanting, embracing a view over the gulf of Acre and its fertile shores, and the blue heights of Lebanon and the White Cape. Carne says, "that no mountain in or around Palestine retains its ancient beauty so much as Carmel.

Two or three villages and some scattered cottages are found on it; its groves are few but luxuriant; it is no place for crags and precipices, or rocks for the wild goats, but presents a surface covered with a rich and constant verdure."

The interior of Galilee and Samaria is often obscured by fogs; but the heights of Carmel enjoy a pure and enlivening atmosphere, calculated to render mere existence a delight, and the almost continual verdure which covers the mountain scarcely allows the whiteness of its calcareous rocks to appear. The pine, oak, laurel, and many other trees grow (but not to any considerable size) above a beautiful carpet of grass and wild flowers; and this rich covering extends to the fine uplands round, watered by numerous streams. The forests and woods of Carmel offer an almost perpetual verdure, and to these woods numerous wild animals resort, while birds in still greater numbers, attracted by the abundance of suitable food, and by the lovely streams which wind through the valley of Carmel, enliven, by the harmony of their varied songs, one of the most beautiful spots of this once highly favoured land.

Such descriptions admirably illustrate the vivid inspiration of the Hebrew prophets and poets, with respect to Carmel. Thus Isaiah alludes to the "excellency of Carmel," and, on account of

the graceful form and verdant beauty of its summit, the head of the bride, in the Song of Solomon, is compared to Carmel. It was also as celebrated for its pastures as Bashan.

The scenes in its interior are often bold and romantic in the highest degree; deep and verdant precipices descending into lovely glens, through which a rivulet is seen wildly dashing; the shepherd and his flock on the long grassy slopes that afford, at present, as rich pasture ground as they did in the days when Nabal fed his numerous herds in Carmel. There is indeed a character peculiarly pastoral about the scenery; few grey and naked rocks, or sublime but unfruitful cliffs are here, as in the mountain of the Temptation, or on Pisgah; and this fertility and vivid verdure, on so sultry a soil, is deeply welcome and refreshing, more especially as it regards the woods that wave over the summit and sides. It is delightful to stand beneath their shelter, on the brink of the mount, and look far on every side, where nought but a forsaken and shadowless land meets the eye. Over the banks of the "ancient river," on which "the strength of the mighty was broken," and the power of Sisera swept away, no solitary tree spreads its shade; the stream rolls between its green and almost naked shores; these are so low that the river overflows to some extent on each side during the rainy season, and is so deep

and rapid as not to be fordable. It was most probably during this season, that the army of Sisera was in part destroyed by the waters, for in its usual narrow course the stream is not of sufficient width and power to be dangerous. This spot was also fatal to a great number of Arabs, who after the memorable battle of Mount Tabor, fought in April 16th, 1799, were drowned in their attempt to escape from the French invaders of Palestine. On the spot pointed out by tradition as having been the scene of Elijah's slaying the priests of Baal, there is much of the picturesque; the soil is strewed with masses of grey stone, around which are many fine trees. But if tradition should err here, there can be no illusion with respect to the scene of the memorable descent of the fire from heaven. When "all Israel was gathered together unto Carmel," it was doubtless on the side of the mountain, where it gradually descends into the noble plain beneath. The spot was finely chosen by the prophet for the spectacle of his sacrifice; since the multitude of people coming from the regions of Samaria might stand with perfect convenience in the splendid and open area of the plain of Esdraelon, which here terminates at the foot of Carmel. The declivity of the mountain, its brow dark with woods, and its sides covered with the richest pasture, look over a vast extent of country on every side. From the hills of Sa-

maria, Cana, and Gilboa the miracle might have been beheld; and to the eager gaze of the Israelites in the plain, the prophets of the groves with their useless altars, and the avenging messenger of God were as distinct as if the scene had been acted at their feet. This too is the only face of the hill, beneath which the Kishon flows. What a noble subject would this be for a painter!—the sun going down on the mountain declivities, while the eye of despair as well as faith was fixed with maddening suspense, or triumph, on the fading sky: and the hushed myriads gazed on each dazzling beam, and caught every passing sound as if the coming of the God was there; the infidel king also, with his chariots and armed men, waiting motionless from morn till eve.

The highest summit, which rises immediately behind the monastery, measures, according to some travellers, 1500 feet above the level of the sea. On this elevation facing the sea tradition says that the prophet Elijah stood, when he prayed for rain, and beheld the cloud arise out of the sea. From the convent on the ridge, the celebrated order of Carmelites took its name. This, in 1821, was destroyed, at the commencement of the Greek revolution, by the Pacha, having been suspected of holding an intercourse with the insurgents. But permission for its rebuilding was obtained from the Sultan, and

it has since been reconstructed on a new and larger scale. The prospect from the site of the convent is of the grandest kind. At the foot of the ascent of the mountain is an oratory, now Turkish, covering a grotto, which is said to have been inhabited by Elijah. Among the ruins of the convent is another grotto, containing an altar dedicated to the Prophet. The Mountain was once the favourite refuge of pilgrims and anchorites; and the grandeur of its prospect, the purity of its air, and the refreshing coolness of its elevation, in the burning summer of the shores below, must have made it, independently of its sacred character, an incomparable retreat, alike from the scorching heat of the plains and the troubles of the world.

As an illustration of this, we will quote the following incident, which occurred to Mr. Skinner while he was on Mount Carmel.

"Padre Camillo (one of the monks of the convent on Mount Carmel) was unwilling to leave his cave, and as the rain had again commenced, we remained there for an hour or two longer. 'What a place for uninterrupted contemplation!' cried he. 'Here, indeed,' quoting a passage from his favourite historian, he continued, 'the plants, the rugged rocks, the moanings of the wind, the prospect of the ocean, the murmuring of the streams, the lowing of the herds, the frisking of

the flocks, the shady valley, the singing of the birds, the delightful clime, the variety of flowers, the odour of the aromatic herbs, how they refresh my soul!' This sounded very sweetly in Italian; and as he delivered it with all his heart, standing in the mouth of the cave, as if he had been before an altar, from the very spot where so much was in reality assembled, too, it came with great force, for the glowing catalogue was not overdrawn."

The convent is described by Lord Lindesay as one of the handsomest in Palestine; it is three stories high, having nine windows towards Acre, and thirteen towards the Mediterranean. "Two monks only were there, but nothing could exceed the cordiality of our reception, and pressing were their entreaties that we should stay three or four days with them. After coffee they showed us their house; think what a pleasant surprise it was, when opening a side door, they ushered us into a suite of no less than five small apartments, fitted up for visitors in the European style, and with European furniture, window-curtains, tables, reed-bottomed and arm-chairs, beds with curtains and gilt corner tops (one room with a double bed for a gentleman and lady), basins, looking-glasses, &c.; and these, with a splendid sea-view from the windows, they begged us to consider at our service for as long as we should like to remain." The church, which at that time was not yet finished, is built

over the cave in which Elijah is said to have dwelt, and in a side chapel they showed a beautiful wooden statue of Elijah killing one of the prophets of Baal."

Professor Hall says that the limestone of which Mount Carmel is composed is interesting, on account of the large balls of quartz contained in it. These balls have been described as petrified melons, but are merely of quartz, in a state of hornstone, and including layers of chalcedony, and crystals of quartz.

In this mountain, as is often the case in compact limestone, there are a great many caverns, more, it is said, than 1000. In one tract, called the Monk's Cavern, as many as 400 lie adjacent to each other, furnished with windows, and with places for sleeping, hewn in the rock. A peculiarity of these caverns is mentioned by Shulz, that the entrances into them are so narrow, that only a single person can creep in at a time, and that the caverns are so crooked that a person is immediately lost to sight, unless closely followed. This may serve to give a clearer view of what is intended in Amos ix. 3, where the Lord says of those who may endeavour to escape his punishments, "Though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence." That these grottoes and caves were already in very ancient times the

abodes of prophets and other religious persons, is well known. The prophets Elijah and Elisha often resorted thither; and at the present day is shown a cavern, called the cave of Elijah; it is a little below the Monk's cavern, and is now a Moslem sanctuary.

Modern travels abound with descriptions of the caves of Syria, some of which are of immense extent. One near Damascus is said to be capable of sheltering 4000 men; and Maundrell describes one under a high rocky mountain, in the vicinity of Sidon, containing 200 smaller caverns. Shaw also mentions the numerous dens, holes, and caves in the mountains on the sea-coast, extending through a long range on each side Joppa. At the time when those mountains of the Holy Land, with which any scriptural incidents could be connected, were crowded with persons, who deemed it meritorious to withdraw from the turmoil of the world, the caves of this mountain were occupied by thousands of such persons, and its sides were covered with the chapels in which they worshipped, and the gardens which they cultivated. The grottoes still exist. Many ruins of the ecclesiastical structures of this time are disposed upon the mountain, and some of its products seem to offer evidence of the cultivation to which it was then subject: but now, after many ages it may be supposed to have reverted

to somewhat more of that natural condition, in which it appeared when the Hebrew prophets and poets celebrated the excellency of Carmel.

Though the soil of the plain of Maron consists of a reddish sand, intermixed with some gravel, it has a considerable degree of fertility when irrigated, and produces good crops of grain, and several kinds of fruit, as figs, olives, pomegranates, oranges, and lemons: the water-melons are of a peculiarly fine quality.

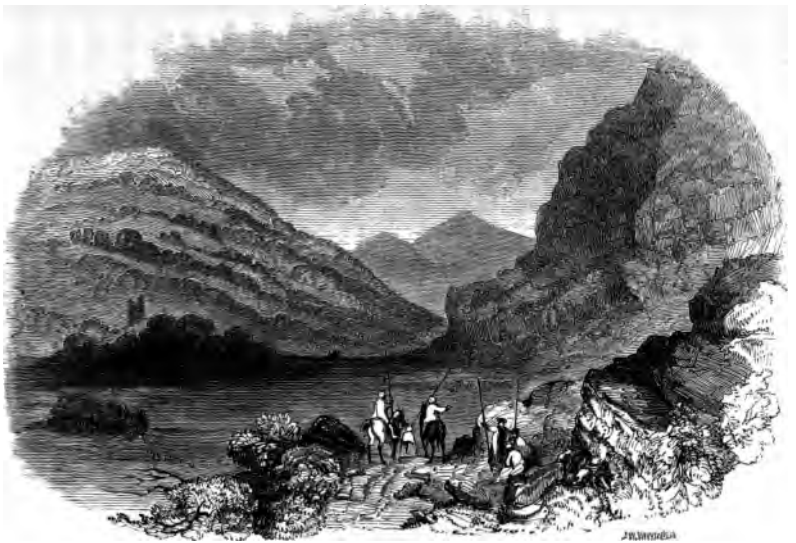
"On our way to Carmel, upon the plain of Sharon," says Mr. Vere Monro, "we crossed a small plot of ground, which had been carelessly turned over with the plough, and sown with melons; the husbandman had gone his way to a distance, carrying his light plough on his shoulder, and would not return until he should calculate that the time of harvest had arrived. There are few productions which more forcibly declare the care and bounty of Providence than this plant; loving the driest soil it flourishes to perfection even in the sandy desert, and produces one of the most juicy and refreshing fruits, in a climate where these are most needed and most grateful."

The tract between the base of Mount Carmel and the Mediterranean has a still better soil, and, when cultivated, produces cotton, wheat, and barley, but a great part has been converted into a swamp by the rivulets descending from Mount

Carmel, which do not find their way to the sea, in consequence of the sand hills thrown up by the south-west winds. These swamps, however, make rich pasture for cattle. In the ancient plain of Esdraelon, on which Mount Tabor is situated, the swamp, formed by the slow movement of the river Kishon after a heavy rain, renders the pasture very rich, and here may be found cattle of a larger size than in any other part of Syria.

That part of the plain covered with brushwood, between the foot of Carmel and the sea is much frequented by various wild animals, particularly boars, who, with troops of young ones, come down from the uplands where they feed at night, to hide themselves during day in the jungle.

When Dr. Shaw was on the coast of this country, he tells us that while the ships were lying at anchor under Mount Carmel, in the middle of April, he saw several flights of storks, some of which were open and scattered, with large intervals between them; others, more compact, each of which took upwards of three hours in passing by, extending at the same time more than half a mile in breadth. They were then leaving Egypt (the canals and ponds annually left by the Nile having become dry) and were directing their course towards the north-east.



MOUNTS EBAL AND GERIZIM.

CHAPTER VIII.

MOUNTS EBAL AND GERIZIM.

WESTWARD of the fertile plain, which, in the days of Israel's prosperity, Jacob bought of the hands of the children of Hamor, and gave to his son Joseph, the scene of frequent assemblage for the tribes of Israel, stand the mountains Ebal and Gerizim. The plain narrows into a valley, lying between these two mountains, and is the Shechem of the Old, the Sychar of the New Testament, and the Nablous of the present day. The valley thus enclosed by these mountains is about 2-300 paces wide, and above three miles in length. At the widest part of the opening is a low pile of rude masonry, surrounded by a large number of loose stones of considerable size, and remains of walls and their foundations. It is an object which many a traveller might overlook, were he not prepared for it by previous announcement. A very ancient well is concealed by these remains, the descent to which is made through a narrow mouth in the stonework above, usually covered

with a massive fragment of stone, which is too heavy to be removed without great strength; and, though the weary traveller would gladly drink of this water, he is told that, in addition to the fact of its mouth being closed, "the well is deep, and there is nothing to draw with." The most august traveller whose feet ever pressed the soil of the Holy Land once rested on the brink of this noted well. That traveller was Jesus of Nazareth. The well is Jacob's well.

When the children of Israel took possession of the promised land, it was on Mount Ebal that God commanded an altar to be reared, and a pillar to be inscribed by Joshua with the law; and the tribes were to be assembled, half on Ebal, and half on Gerizim, to hear the fearful maledictions pronounced by the Levites upon all who should violate the obligations of the sacred code, and the blessings promised to those who should observe them. The blessings and curses seem to have remained upon these mountains, for while Gerizim is fertile, and of pleasant aspect, Ebal is nearly barren. The valley which divides them, shaded with groves of figs, olives, almonds, and apricots, bounded by these high mountains, and with a clear and beautiful stream winding and murmuring through its centre, is one of the most beautiful in Palestine. On the heights of Mount Gerizim as the highest mountain in Sa-

maria, once stood a Samaritan temple, to the religious exercises connected with which, the woman of Samaria most probably referred, when, at the well of Jacob, she said to her illustrious Teacher, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain." From Josephus we learn that Manasses, the brother of Jaddua, the Jewish high-priest, being expelled from the altar for his marriage with the daughter of Sanballat, Duke of Samaria, built his temple on Gerizim, after the fashion of that at Jerusalem; it was used by the Samaritans in preference to the latter, at first for the sake of convenience, and afterwards from feelings of hatred to their Jewish brethren. Antiochus Epiphanes placed here a statue of Jupiter Hospitalis, and Hyrcanus destroyed the temple, and annihilated the Cuthæi. The summit of Mount Gerizim is now occupied by the tomb of an Arab chief, a structure of modern character; but an annual procession is still made to the spot, by the small residue of the Samaritan people who yet occupy their ancient city. The sides of Mount Ebal are pierced with many tombs, the entrances to which are formed according to architectural rule, like that of Archimedes at Syracuse.

But what gives the most abiding and peculiar interest to the Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, is, after all, the fact that on their sides were

gathered the tribes of Israel, to hear and respond to the blessings and curses of Jehovah; while the Ark of the Covenant, surrounded by its attendant priests and Levites, was placed in the lovely valley between. How awfully solemn must have been the assemblage, and the occasion! Israel was then victorious in the land of promise, and there it was that their whole destiny was open before them, as it was to result from either their obedience or the contrary. On Gerizim stood the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin, "to bless the people." On Ebal stood those of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphthali, "for a cursing." Soon the expectant silence of the vast concourse was broken by the loud voice of the Levites sounding upwards from the valley, uttering in the name of the God of Israel, the curses attendant on a disobedience to the Divine will, which had been revealed from Heaven as a law, and written plainly on large stones, set up on Mount Ebal; and at every pause, the tribes on Mount Ebal gave forth their solemn "Amen," while, in like manner, the blessings of obedience were heard and responded to by the tribes stationed on Gerizim. The curse has been terribly fulfilled upon apostate Israel; and of this, every Jew, of every subsequent age of their history, has been a living memorial not to be denied or overlooked. Per-

haps there are not two more awfully interesting chapters in the Old Testament than those which record these transactions on Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, and in the Vale of Sychar.

Dr. Ollin, an American traveller, in the month of April, ascended to the top of Gerizim, which he states to be somewhat higher than that of Ebal. The ascent is by an ancient road, excavated in the side of the mountain with much labour, and, in the steeper parts of the ascent, fashioned into a regular flight of broad stone steps. This was, probably, the principal ascent to the ancient town and fortress, whose ruins cover the top of the mountain, and that pursued by the religious processions in their way from the Valley of Shechem to the temple which the Samaritans built on this mountain, in rivalry of the orthodox temple at Jerusalem. The top of Gerizim affords a commanding view of a considerable region, chiefly occupied with mountains of inferior elevation, but also embracing several fruitful valleys. Cultivation is carried quite to the top of the mountain, which is clothed with plantations of fruit trees, whilst every level spot, and a vast number of fields, supported by terraces on the lower parts of both, were sown in wheat. A considerable part of the table-land on Mount Gerizim itself, exhibits marks of recent tillage. Mount Ebal, as viewed from this spot, spreads out like the latter,

into a table-land, but is apparently rocky and more broken, and less susceptible of cultivation.

The town of Sychar is nearly concealed by the thick olive-groves of the valley, till you are within a few hundred yards of its walls, when it breaks upon the view, with its graceful minarets embosomed in the rich foliage which this abundantly watered valley so luxuriantly cherishes. Almonds, pomegranates, vines, figs, mulberries, apples, and orange trees, grow with the greatest luxuriance; while the cultivation of melons, cucumbers, and similar garden produce, affords an abundant supply for a general consumption, which is carried as far as Jerusalem. The melons of Sychar are much esteemed. In some places, the cliffs of Gerizim seem to overhang the town; and when Jotham addressed his fable of the trees to the men of Shechem, from one of the points on the summit, his voice might be heard in the city below. It was one of the ancient cities of refuge, and quite as interesting on account of its scriptural associations, as from anything in its present character and appearance. "But," says Mr. Fisk, "Sychar should be always viewed from without. The charm is lost when once you set foot within its poor and miserable streets, and offensive bazaars. We rode through it, but made no stay; only taking a leisurely survey, as we passed, of the pursuits and occupations of the people. Some

were seated in groups, amidst piles of cucumbers, melons, and other fruits, some were engaged in cutting and preparing for sale large supplies of tobacco; others were carrying to and from the fountains water bottles made of the untanned skins of sheep and goats; while veiled women were shuffling about in their yellow morocco boots, thrust into loose slippers, which gave them a very awkward gait. In many of the houses and bazaars, we noticed an extensive manufacture of cotton, in various stages, some were carding, others were spinning, and not a few weaving. There was a general appearance of activity and liveliness amidst the population, though, in most streets were to be found large parties of those lovers of ease, whose day is spent reclining in the shade, and inhaling the fumes of Lataika."

CHAPTER IX.

EPHRAIM.

One of the finest and most fruitful parts of Palestine, occupying the very centre of the land, was assigned to the tribe of Ephraim. It extended from the borders of the Mediterranean on the west, to the Jordan on the east. This rich tract of country included most of what was afterwards called Samaria, as distinguished from Judea on the one hand, and from Galilee on the other. The tabernacle and the ark were deposited within its limits at Shiloh; and the possession of the sacerdotal establishment, which was a central object of attraction to all the other tribes, must, in no small degree, have enhanced its importance, and increased its wealth and population. The group of mountains called Ephraim, occupies the central part of the southernmost border of this tribe; and in the time of Joshua these hills were densely covered with trees, which is by no means the case at present, but they are well watered,

and the rich pastures of the valleys are clothed with verdant herbage, and are still very fruitful. The terraced hills, and often the rocks, are, in the season, entirely hid by the vine and fig-tree; under the latter flourishes the waving corn, while the pathway is adorned by a large species of convolvulus, and many other sweet flowers.

On Mount Ephraim Joshua and Eleazar, the sons of Aaron, were buried. Here also Micah, the idolater, lived, and Elkanah, the father of Samuel. At the north-west end, and occupying a site of considerable elevation, is the valley of Luban, believed to be the ancient Lebonah.

A recent traveller, passing by night through this valley, remarks, "We were attended for above the space of an hour with an ignis fatuus, that displayed itself in a variety of extraordinary appearances; for it was sometimes globular, like the flame of a candle; afterwards it would spread itself and involve our whole company in its pale, inoffensive light; then at once contract and suddenly disappear. But in less than a minute it would begin to exert itself, as at other times, running along from one place to another, like a train of gunpowder set on fire; or else it would expand itself over more than two or three acres of the adjacent mountains, discovering every shrub and tree that grew upon them. The atmosphere,

from the beginning of the evening, had been remarkably thick and hazy, and the dew as we felt it upon our bridles, was unusually clammy and unctuous. I have observed at sea, in the like dispositions of weather, those luminous bodies that skip about the masts and yards of ships. This description of a natural phenomenon must strongly remind the reader of the 29th Psalm, especially of the 7th verse."

The Rev. G. Fisk, in his visit to the Holy Land, says, "We had quitted the territory of Benjamin, and were now upon the mountains of Ephraim, amidst small quiet villages and ancient sites, presenting themselves here and there, at almost every turn of the road, one which must have frequently been traversed by our Blessed Redeemer, when passing from Jerusalem to Galilee. Finding it quite impossible to reach Nablous during the evening march, we pitched the tents upon a threshing floor, near a small village, called Hawarah, where we were soon surrounded by a large party of Syrian shepherds and villagers, from whom we obtained a good supply of delicious milk and cheese, and excellent water, for a trifling remuneration." The virtue of hospitality was, and still is the national character of the Arabs, they value themselves upon it as their highest glory. The mountaineers upon a journey never think of spending a para for their eating,

drinking, or lodging. On arriving at a village in the evening, they alight at the dwelling of some acquaintance, if they have any, which is generally the case, and say to the owner, "I am your guest." The host gives the traveller a supper, consisting of milk, bread, and borgul, and, if rich and liberal, feeds his mule or mare also. When the traveller has no acquaintance in the village, he alights at any house he pleases, ties up his beast, and smokes his pipe till he receives a welcome from the master of the house, who makes it a point of honour to receive him as a friend, and to give him a supper. In the morning he departs with a simple good-bye. "It is a point of honour," says Burckhardt, "with the host never to accept the smallest return from a guest. I only once ventured to give a few piastres to the child of a very poor family at Zahomet, by whom we had been most hospitably treated, and rode off without attending to the earnest cries of the mother, who insisted upon my taking back the money." And another traveller, speaking of the Druzes, says, "Whoever presents himself at their door, in the quality of a suppliant or passenger, is sure of being entertained with lodging and food in the most generous and unaffected manner. I have often seen the lowest peasants give the last morsel

of bread they had in their houses to the hungry traveller. When they have once contracted with their guests the sacred engagement of bread and salt, no subsequent event can make them violate it."

CHAPTER X.

MOUNT GILBOA.

GILBOA is a mountain memorable for the defeat of Saul by the Philistines, where his three sons were slain, and where he himself died by his own hand. The ridge of mountains, of which it forms the highest range, bound the great plain of Esdraelon, on the south-east, and are interposed between it and the valley of the Jordan, nearly opposite little Hermon.

On passing across the plain of Jezreel, Mr. Paxton notices the mountain of Gilboa projecting into the plain, where the battle seems to have been begun. When overcome, Israel fled to the hill, and then Saul and his sons fell.

"I could not but be struck," says Mr. Paxton, "while looking on this elevation from the plain, to see how well it accorded with the statement that the chariots and horsemen followed hard after Saul on Mount Gilboa. The ascent from the plain is such, that horsemen and chariots

might pass even to the top of this hill." In their sterile and arid character, these hills are remarkably distinguished from those of the lesser Hermon, and indeed from all other mountains in this neighbourhood, which are mostly covered with trees, and copses, herbs, flowers, and grass. Its peculiarly desolate character was ascribed by most of the old travellers, to the poetical curse of David upon the mountains where "the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away," in the words, "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings." 2 Sam. i. 21.

But this is, perhaps, assigning, too literal a sense to the denunciations of the Royal Poet, since it is admitted that ample dews and heavy rains have been experienced by travellers upon these very mountains. A few villages are to be seen with their vineyards, olive, and other plantations around them, and a straggling flock or two find scanty pasturage, where all around is desolate and barren. Two or three other streams are also to be met with in the neighbourhood; one is justly supposed to be the ancient fountain of Jezreel, where Saul and his beloved son Jonathan pitched their camp before the last fatal engagement. There is still an inhabited village in whose name of Jelbon, that of Gilboa may be recognised.

Mr. Carne, who crossed this desolate range of mountains, thus describes his impressions on the scene. "We pursued our way through a territory unrelieved by a single shrub, or blade of verdure, where for many leagues no trace of a habitation was visible, but the path grew more exciting as we approached the mountains of Gilboa. There was a solitary grandeur and stern sublimity in the scene, on which the traveller could not help pausing to gaze, even had it awaked no vivid associations of the times of old. Utter solitude was on every side; the mountains were broken in some parts into naked precipices and pointed summits; they were not dwelling-places for man, save for the wandering shepherd, whose search for pasturage must often have been in vain."

CHAPTER XI.

THE MOUNTAINS OF SEIR.

These mountains of Seir must not be understood as a single range of high hills, but as an extensive mountainous region, from ten to twelve leagues in width, separating the Stony Arabia from the eastern deserts of sand. On first viewing these mountains from the southern part of the valley of Arabia, high rocks of granite appear as if fractured into a thousand different forms, from which rugged appearance the mountains are said to take the appellation of Seir, though the name is also said to be derived from the Seir, or chief of the Horim, who were the former inhabitants of the country, afterwards possessed by the Moabites. That the exterior aspects, viewed from the valley, are unusually stern and dark, would appear from the general terms which travellers employ. Lord Lindesay speaks of them as "the black mountains from which the Edomites looked down;" and Mr.

MOUNTAINS OF SEIR.

Stephens, standing on the northern extremity of the Ælamitic gulf, saw before him the broad sandy valley of Akaba, with high, dark and barren mountains bounding it like a wall. He says, "The land of Idumæa lay before me in barrenness and desolation; no trees grew in the valley, and no verdure on the mountain-tops. All was bare, dreary, and desolate. The opposite or eastern face presents a very different aspect, not only from its apparent lowness, for viewed from the plain on this side the ascent is comparatively slight, but from its regular form, and from being covered with vegetable mould. This was too important a feature in so stony and sandy a region to have been overlooked, and accordingly numerous marks of ancient cultivation are here found. Stones which have been arranged to mark the limits of fields, as well as the ruins of separate habitations and villages, scattered everywhere over this elevated country, still attest the industry of the ancient inhabitants in cultivating an apparently unfriendly soil. Lord Lindesay, who crossed Seir in its northern portion, speaks of its being a country of most utter desolation, hills succeeding hills, without the slightest picturesque beauty, covered with loose flints, sand, and gravel, a complete desert." Belzoni, who approached it on the most favourable side, gives the following striking de-

scription of the nakedness of the land through which he journeyed in reaching it. "It is," says he, "difficult to form a correct idea of a desert without having been in one; it is an endless plain of sand and stones, sometimes intermixed with mountains of all sizes and heights, without roads or shelter, without any sort of produce for food. The few scattered trees and shrubs of thorns, that only appear when the rainy season leaves some moisture, barely serve to feed the animals, and a few birds. Everything is left to Nature; the wandering inhabitants do not care to cultivate even those few plants, and when there is no more of them in one place, they go away to another. When the trees become old, and lose their vegetation in such climates as these, the sun, which constantly beams upon them, burns and reduces them to ashes. I have seen many of them entirely burnt, their form remaining in ashes. The other smaller plants have no sooner risen out of the earth, than they are dried up, and take the colour of straw. After wandering for many days in this monotonous desert, the sight of the distant hills of Seir was a pleasant relief to the eye, and we thought we could understand a little of the feeling which led Moses to utter the prayer, after being forty years in the desert, "I pray Thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly

mountain, and Lebanon." The precise place from which Moses first beheld the "Land of Promise," has been much disputed by travellers; the most probable spot is said to be pointed out in the chain of mountains, commencing nearly opposite the northern extremity of the Asphaltic lake, and at its other extremity joining Mount Seir: these appear to form the mountains, which in Scripture bear the name of Abarim. There, it is recorded that from Mount Nebo, one of the highest summits of this range, and one which, from the context, must have been in the northern part, Moses was permitted to view the promised land, and here he died.

The highest summit among the mountains of Seir is Mount Hor, on which Aaron died, and whose towering bulk is a landmark to the wanderer afar off in the surrounding deserts. It offers a commanding view over the plains and mountains below, and, "If," says Mr. Stephens, "I had never stood on the top of Sinai, I should say that nothing could exceed the desolation of the view from the summit of Mount Hor; its most striking objects being the dreary and rugged mountains of Seir, bare and naked of trees and verdure, and bearing their lofty summits to the skies, as if in a vain and fruitless effort to excel the mighty pile, on the top of which the high-priest of Israel was buried. Yet even here, all is not

barren. The interior of these desolate mountains, their valleys and hollows, present many a scene of verdure and beauty." While the same writer, in summing up his impressions, remembers that the mountains were barren, solitary and desolate, and that the higher he ascended the more wild and rugged did their aspect become, rising into sublimity and grandeur,—he does not forget that, among these arid wastes of crumbling rock, there were beautiful streams gushing forth from the sides of the mountains; and sometimes small valleys where the green grass and shrubs were putting forth in early spring, and that he saw, among the stony mountains of Arabia Petræa, more verdure than he had observed since he left the banks of the Nile. But the spot by which travellers are now attracted to the mountains of Seir, is the deep hollow in their bosom, whose tall cliffs offer those wonderful sculptures and excavations of temples, habitations and tombs, which compose the ancient metropolis of Edom, now but lately revealed to the admiration of nations, which have sprung into existence since it became a desolation. This, and other hollows and valleys of these mountains, exhibit some very striking characteristics, and all travellers mention with wonder and admiration, the beautiful and varied appearance of the rock composing the cliffs which enclose the valley of

Petra. "The whole stony rampart that encircled the city," says Mr. Stephens, "was of a peculiarity and beauty that I never saw elsewhere, being a dark ground, with veins of white, blue, red, purple, and sometimes scarlet, and light orange, running through it in rainbow streaks; and within the chambers, where there had been no exposure to the elements, the freshness and beauty of the colours in which these waving lines were drawn, gave an effect hardly inferior to that of the paintings in the tombs of the kings at Thebes." Other travellers speak to the same effect; and Lord Lindesay adds, that some of the oldest excavations are almost filled with earth, decomposed from fragments that are constantly flaking off from the roof. "I was surprised," says he, "to find the stone so crumbling; it must have been as easy to cut as chalk; I could break it easily with my fingers." Stephens was informed by the Arabs that no stone, veined like the rocks at Petra, was to be found elsewhere, which at least shows that they know of none like it. A few miles to the north of this city of tombs is another valley, described as being extremely romantic, with lofty, almost perpendicular crags, towering on each side, with deep fissures yawning in their breasts, tufted with evergreens, and single isolated rocks guarding the pass like sentinels, the road winding

through a thick wood of sedder, arrah, oleander, and acacia trees,—every shade of green. Mr. Macmichael, who visited Petra, and explored its remarkable ruins, also ascended Mount Hor. "Taking," says he, "a south-westerly direction from the ruined palace at Petra, we arrived at the foot of Mount Hor, at three in the afternoon, where, finding an Arab boy tending some goats, he offered, for a small remuneration, to conduct us to the summit. The ascent was rugged and difficult in the extreme, and it occupied us one hour and a half to climb the almost perpendicular sides. A crippled Arab hermit, about eighty years of age, the one half of which he had spent upon the top of the mountain, living on the donations of the few Mohammedan pilgrims who resort thither and the charity of the native shepherds, who supply him with water and milk, conducted us to a small white building, crowned by a cupola, that contains the tomb of Aaron. The monument is of stone, about three feet high, and the venerable Arab, having lighted a lamp, led us down some steps, to a chamber hewn out of the rock, but containing nothing extraordinary. Against the walls of the upper apartment, where stood the tomb, were suspended beads, bits of cloth and leather, votive offerings left by the devotees. On one side, let into the wall, we were shown a dark-looking stone, that was reputed

to possess considerable virtues in the cure of diseases, and to have formerly served as a seat to the Prophet."

The view from the summit of the edifice is very extensive in every direction, but there is no part of it more interesting than the crags of Mount Hor itself, which stand up on every side, in the most rugged and fantastic forms, sometimes strangely piled one on the other, and sometimes as strangely yawning in clefts of a frightful depth, variegated in hue, but presenting, in the distance, one uniform mass of rich dark purple. "An artist, who would study rock scenery in all its wildest and most extravagant forms, and in colours which, to one who has not seen them, could scarcely be supposed natural, would," says Captain Irby, "find himself rewarded, should he resort to Mount Hor for that sole purpose."

CHAPTER XII.

LEBANON.

THE two parallel ranges of the mountains of Lebanon form, at their termination, the natural frontier of Palestine, and enclose between them a fertile valley, which has the average breadth of fifteen miles. The westernmost of these ranges gradually inclines towards the sea, and terminates at the mouth of the Leontes, near the renowned city of Tyre; while the more inland range divides near the sources of the Jordan, to enclose on the east and west the prolonged basin, which contains the Jordan and its lakes, and the valley and gulf of Akaba. This range has been called, from its situation, the back bone of Palestine. The denomination of Lebanon is applied in Scripture, and by the ancient Orientals to both, or indifferently to either of the parallel ranges, which enclose the long valley of Cœle-Syria. The present natives of the country have found the convenience of distinguishing the two ranges

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by different names; Anti-Libanus (Jebel Essparki) they call the eastern mountain, in opposition to Libanus, which they call the western (Jebel el Gharbi), but to which they also assign the ancient name in the form of Jebel Libuan. The highest mountain of Anti-Libanus, bearing the name of Jebel Essheikh, is unquestionably Mount Hermon, the perpetual snow of whose far-seen summit, is more than once alluded to by the sacred writers. It reaches to nearly 9000 feet above the level of the sea. From its base the Jordan takes its rise. It is probably the highest of all the Lebanon mountains, and is thought to rival Mont Blanc, though, as Elliot observes, "the high ground on which it stands detracts considerably from its apparent altitude, and makes it a less imposing object than that monarch of European mountains, as viewed from the Italian valley of Aosta." Its top is covered with snow throughout the year, and the fanciful resemblance afforded by the lengthened streaks on its sloping ridges to the hoary head and beard of a venerable old man, has obtained for it the name of Sheikh's mountain. "Lebanon," truly remarks an Arabian poet, "bears winter on its head, spring plays about its shoulders, autumn rests upon its bosom, while summer lies sleeping at its feet." Streams fed from the ice and snow of the summit find

their way down its sides, sometimes forming beautiful cascades, which recall to us the words of the prophet Jeremiah when speaking of the folly of a man who forsakes God, as being like him who scorns the cool flowing streams that come from the side of Lebanon, a remark which would be well comprehended in a sultry climate where water, from its scarceness, was a treasure fully appreciated. "It is an observation," writes Dr. Shaw at or near Jerusalem, "that, provided a moderate quantity of snow or rain falls in the beginning of February, and the streams and fountains overflow a little afterwards, there is the prospect of a fruitful and plentiful year; the inhabitants making upon these occasions the like rejoicings with the Egyptians upon the cutting of the Nile." In these northern climates, where the dew is inconsiderable, we can scarcely comprehend its importance in Eastern lands, where at some seasons it is a most welcome substitute for the rain which refreshes our soil. When Maundrell was in the vicinity of Mount Hermon, he observed that "he was taught by experience what the Psalmist meant by the dew of Hermon, the tents being as wet with it as if it had rained all night." Dr. Shaw also remarks "that the dew often wets the traveller to the skin, but no sooner is the sun risen, and the atmosphere a little heated, than the mists and the copious

moisture, which the dews occasion, are quickly dispersed."

Irwin, in his voyage up the Red Sea, when on the Arabian shore, says; "Difficult as we find it to keep ourselves cool in the day-time, it is no easy matter to defend our bodies from the damps of the night, when the wind is loaded with the heaviest dews that ever fell; we lie exposed to the whole weight of the dews, and the cloaks in which we wrap ourselves, are as wet in the morning as if they had been immersed in the sea." The whole extensive chain of the Kesraoun, and the country of the Druses is included under the name Lebanon, which means white mountain, and is given to the range purely because of the whitish colour of its rocky sides, and partly on account of the snow which covers the summits of this majestic range of mountains.

That it is the highest part of all Syria is proved by the course of its two principal rivers, the Orontes and the Jordan, which, arising at the opposite extremities of the range, are compelled by the declivities to shape their course, the one to the extreme north, and the other to the extreme south of Syria. The port of Larnæa in Cyprus is distant thirty leagues, but the traveller scarcely leaves it before he discovers the highest summits of Libanus capped with clouds. None of these mountains have been measured; but, during winter,

the mountains throughout the whole extent of Scanderoon, to Northern Palestine, are covered with snow; and its disappearance or continuance, on the advance of summer, of course affords a test of comparative elevation, for in and after the month of March, all this snow dissolves, except in the higher regions of Lebanon. Dr. Clarke, observing the mountain in July, from the plain of Esdraelon, says, "The summit was so lofty that the snow entirely covered the upper part of it, not lying in patches as, during summer, upon the tops of some very elevated mountains, but investing all the higher part with that perfect white and smooth velvet-like appearance, which snow only exhibits when it is very deep."

CHAPTER XIII.

"'His countenance is as Lebanon;' such," says Mr. Fisk, "is the figure used by Solomon, to indicate the dignity, beauty, and majesty of the 'beloved,' the great head of the Church. They who have gazed upon Lebanon from the heights about Beyrout, and marked its varied aspect, as the light and shade throw their garniture of beauty around it, must have felt how noble an image it is, how fitting in its application." Lebanon is a little world in itself, and the history of its tribes, its religious and superstitious institutions, its warfares, and reverses of fortune would occupy a far larger space than we have to spare. The two principal tribes who inhabit the region, are the Maronites, in communion with the see of Rome, though not entirely accordant in all particulars; and the Druses, whose religion is an unsearchable, secret mysticism. The feud between them is deadly and devastating; and, during the late war, it was the policy of the Turkish government to supply them both with ammunition, in the hope of re-

ducing their aggregate numbers to a more manageable scale.

Carne, in his visit to the Holy Land, gives a glowing description of Mount Lebanon, which he ascended in the noon of a summer's day. "The heat was oppressive, and the air so transparent, that the peaks of snow looked, in the dazzling beams, like so many fiery crests, on which a few thin clouds are floating, like little isles, faintly peopling a lone and beautiful sea. Many a projecting ledge, many a noble tree, growing out of the clefts of the rock, invited to a few moments' pause, to gaze on the defiles beneath, or on the rich banks of wild flowers on every side. The valleys, that seem so narrow at the top, are every one accessible by winding paths to where the stream blesses as it winds, but blesses only a wilderness. The paths require a careful eye on the mule; the steps, either natural or cut, that form part of the way, being sometimes several feet deep in the rock, and on the verge of a tremendous precipice, it is safest here to travel on foot."

One of the most agreeable features of a tour in Lebanon, is the certainty of an excellent and hospitable asylum at the close of almost every day's journey. The gate of one of the numerous convents is sure to open to the wanderer, where a clean cell, a refreshing, and often luxurious repast, with

the mountain wines, is soon prepared. Should it happen that no convent is within reach, the house of the Sheikh of the Maronite village is a welcome, and sometimes a better, substitute.

Throughout the whole of Lebanon, every spot capable of receiving grain is under culture to the very summit, and the villages are embosomed in walnut and mulberry trees, orchards and vineyards. Juniper and barberries abound, and a great quantity of rhubarb grows at the very edge of, and even under, the snow. The snow on Lebanon, in the course of the night, becomes frozen hard enough to support the baggage-animals, but would not bear the lighter weight, and less penetrating foot of man, after the sun had been upon it for half an hour, and thus it is impossible to pass during the day: travellers, therefore, after halting for the night, commence their journey two hours before daybreak, for if the sun should overtake them before they can clear the snowy district, they would run the risk of being lost, a catastrophe which has happened both to men and horses, who have attempted the passage after sunrise. "The snow," says Mr. Munro, "when we began our journey after the night halt, was as hard as marble, and very slippery, for some distance not more than a foot deep, except in a ravine on the left of our tract, which was so filled as to be marked only by a slightly concave surface.

We crossed this ravine near the top, where it was a hundred yards wide; and a small patch on the opposite side being kept clear of snow, by the swampy nature of the ground, from whence a rill took its rise, served to show that the sun had influence even in this cold region, for the Vinca minor, and the delicate little Scilla Italica were in flower. The ridge of snow upon the actual summit, forty feet in height, was narrow; the east side being almost perpendicular, like a wall. Under this we proceeded for a short distance to the north, before we could ascend, and then crossed it obliquely. From hence the celebrated cedars were visible, two miles and a half to the north-west, in a small clump considerably below the summit of the mountain, which here bays round, and forms the head of a magnificent valley. The east was purpled by the sun, whose disk, now edging the horizon, warned us to hasten forward that we might escape before the snow should become too soft to bear us. The necessity for accelerating our pace was apparent at each step. The surface hitherto hard, was now becoming loose, and would not support the weight of the mules, who, sinking to their knees, trembled at every joint, as if aware of their danger. It was with the utmost difficulty we could get them to move; for hanging back, and stretching out their necks, to examine with the eye and nostril the treacher-

ous paths, their instinct reproached us for having placed them in such peril, while they pleaded to be allowed the use of their sagacity to extricate themselves. But the great danger was in delay; so changing their order, we brought one forward which was less timid than the leader, and proceeded more rapidly. The snow was now giving fast; and the animals sinking to their shoulders scrambled, plunged, and lay prostrate, till we could ease them of their burdens, and enable them to rise, when they struggled forward a few steps to fall again. We were ourselves, at times, engulfed to the middle, or, falling through with one leg, avoided a further immersion, by crawling horizontally to firmer footing, and in this manner we laboured on until we arrived among the bare rocks of the mountain." Burckhardt gives a similar account of his ascent, adding, that, when they reached the summit, they were glad to stretch themselves for an hour on the snow, to recover breath, and to repose. The view, however, seems to repay any labour in the ascent. He, with Lord Lindesay describes the view from the top of Lebanon as being magnificent in the extreme, particularly looking towards the Mediterranean, which, far on the western horizon, meets and mingles with the sky. "After feasting our eyes," continues his lordship, "on a view so splendid, we found leisure to observe a small group of trees,

not larger, apparently, than a clump in an English park, at the very foot of the northern wing or horn of this grand natural theatre. These were the far-famed cedars. We were an hour and twenty minutes in reaching them, the descent being very precipitous and difficult. As we entered the grove, the air was quite perfumed with their odour, 'the smell of Lebanon,' so celebrated by the pen of inspiration. We halted under one of the largest trees, inscribed with De la Borde's name on one side, and De Lamartine's on the other. But we were not ourselves sacrilegious enough to wound these glorious trees. I am happy to say there are few English names cut on them. I would as soon cut my name on the wall of a church. Several generations of cedars, all growing promiscuously together, compose this beautiful grove. The younger are very numerous; the second-rate would form a noble wood of themselves, were even the patriarchal dynasty quite extinct; one of them, by no means the largest, measures nineteen feet and a quarter in circumference, and in repeated instances two, three, and four large trunks spring in a cluster, from a single root. But they have all a fresher appearance than the patriarchs, and straighter stems, straight as young palm-trees. Of the giants, there are seven standing very near each other, all on the same hill, three more further on,

in a line with them. It is gratifying to reflect that great care is now taken of these remnants of the giant vegetable world. The trees are considered sacred, and the patriarch of the convent performs a solemn yearly mass under their shade, on the feast of the Transfiguration."

The site of these noble trees is a very unsheltered one, on a ridge near the highest part of Lebanon, encompassed with snow several feet deep, during half the year, and open to the wildest mountain winds and storms. The small forest includes a great number of young cedars, and the whole can be walked round in half an hour. Pococke says, "that the great cedars, at some distance, look like spreading oaks; the bodies of the trees are short, dividing at bottom into three or four, some of which, growing up together for about ten feet, appear something like those gothic columns which seem to be composed of several pillars." The oldest cedars in England are not more than a hundred and sixty years old; but some on the Continent, which have been planted at least three centuries, compared with those of Lebanon are but saplings. "I went to see them," says Father Dandini; "they are called saints because of their antiquity; moreover, as these trees are but few in number, the Arabs esteem it a miracle that they cannot be reckoned exactly. I counted twenty-three, and another of

my companions twenty-one. They never fell them to make boards. Indeed they say that some Turks, who cut down one of these sacred trees, were punished forthwith, by the loss of all their cattle."

The ascent from Eden to the cedars is about five miles, allowing for the winding of the road, which is very rugged, passing over hill and glen; the time occupied depends on the season of the year. Lamartine was three hours on the way in the month of June, and could then only survey them at a distance of many hundred yards, in the deep snow. "At first," says another traveller, "they appeared like a dark spot on the mountain, and afterwards like a clump of dwarfish shrubs, that possessed neither dignity nor beauty: in about an hour and a half we reached them. They are large, tall, and beautiful, the most picturesque productions of the vegetable world." In ancient times the forest extended most probably over the heights and vales nearer to the village of Eden, which was then celebrated as the region of the finest trees. The forest that supplied, during so many ages, so great a demand, must have covered an extensive tract of ground, and the trees, as at present, have stood closely together. The cedar of this species is not found in the other part of Lebanon, being confined to the consecrated spot. Walnut, mulberry,

oak, pine, with innumerable plantations of the vine abound all over the mountain; the vast and beautiful sycamores, of a size to shelter a small caravan (men, horses, and camels), beneath its branches, are found at intervals in the plain at the edge of the mountain.

This grove of cedars sometimes fails to make the impression on the traveller for which he is prepared. "But," says Mr. Fisk, "let such a one put himself in the place of an Asiatic passing from barren desert to barren desert, traversing oceans of sand, and mountains of naked rock, accustomed to countries like Egypt, Arabia, Judea, and Asia Minor, abounding, in the best places only, with shrubbery and fruit trees; let him, with the feelings of such a man, climb the rugged rocks, and cross the naked ravines of Lebanon, and suddenly descry, among the hills, a grove of three hundred trees, such as the cedars actually are, even at the present day, and he will confess that to be a fine comparison in Amos xi. 9, 'Whose height was as the height of cedars, and he was as strong as the oaks.' Let him after a long ride in the heat of the sun, sit down in the shade of a cedar, and contemplate the exact conical form of its top, and the beautiful symmetry of its branches, and he will no longer wonder that David compared the people of Israel, in the days of their prosperity, to the goodly

cedars. A traveller who has just left the rich forests of America, may think this little grove of cedars, not worthy of so much notice, but the man who knows how rare large trees are in Asia, and how difficult it is to find timber for building, will feel at once that what is said in Scripture of these trees, is perfectly natural. It is probable that in the days of Solomon and Hiram, there were extensive forests of these trees in Lebanon, a variety of causes may have contributed to their diminution and almost total extinction, yet in comparison with all the other trees I have seen on the mountain, the few that remain may still be called the glory of Lebanon.

"While assembled beneath the canopy formed by these natural wonders," says Mr. Fisk, "we were visited by a small party of Maronite monks, who have a chapel among them, and are connected with a convent not far distant. They brought us a supply of new milk, and very pleasant curd cheese, which, with a few eggs and bread already in our stores, made out a very fair breakfast. We had wished to be quite alone among the cedars of Lebanon, but were wholly unable to shake off two officious monks, and an Arab boy, who tracked us in every step, knowing well the meaning of the hateful word 'Backshech,' and pronouncing it with perfect ease, and no small importunity; but we had paid liberally for our

milk and cheese, and determined not to yield to their cupidity. One of the monks seemed very anxious to secure our attention to the rude chapel in which he was, I presume, the chief officiating priest. It consisted of four bare walls, open at top, without any roof, having an altar, with some attempts at tinsel, decoration, and sacramental vessels."

CHAPTER XIV.

TRIBES of Arabs are often wandering on Lebanon during the summer months, in search of pasture; remaining for a time in the fertile spots, with their cattle, and then striking their tents to seek a fresh pasturage. Some of the districts of the mountain, like those of the Alps, are covered with grass, and the numerous springs, together with the heavy dews which fall during the summer months, produce a verdure, richer and deeper in tints than in less favoured parts. The Arabs come up hither, and wander about for five months in the year; in winter they descend to the more sheltered valleys, or pass the winter months on the sea-shore about Tripoli and Tartous. "I was astonished," says Burckhardt, "at seeing, so high in the mountain, numerous camels, and Arab huts. Though, like the Bedouins, they have no fixed habitations, their features are not of the true Bedouin cast, and their dialect, though different from that of the peasants, is not a pure Bedouin dialect. They are tributary to the Turkish governors, and at peace with all the

country people, but they have the character of a great propensity to thieving; their property, besides camels, consists in horses, cows, sheep, and goats. The words, 'O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars,' can now apply only to those wandering Bedouins, or to the Sheikh, and his little tribe, who, in summer, come and dwell beneath their shadow. Here they may be seen partaking of their rude repast, and conversing round the large fire, of which the forest afforded materials. No danger can be apprehended with regard to the venerable cedars, for the Arabs regard them with such superstitious veneration, that they would rather fire their own dwelling than touch a splinter from these sacred trees."

Between Beyrout and the foot of the mountain, the way lies along roads of sand, often deep enough to be very inconvenient to the horses; and on all sides are large plantations of mulberry trees, cultivated for the maintenance of silk-worms. These plantations are hedged in by rows of the prickly pear, the fruit of which the Arabs eat abundantly; indeed it is, during the season, one of their principal articles of sustenance. It grows with a thorny skin, and requires, when prepared for food, to be handled with dexterity, or the hand may be severely wounded. The flavour of it is somewhat like a fresh fig, but mawkish. It wants

more acid to make it agreeable to an European palate. One of the most refreshing, while it is one of the most common trees in Palestine, is the pomegranate, which, from its singular beauty, was chosen to be an ornament of the Temple of Solomon. It rises to the height of twenty feet, sending out long branches covered with spear-shaped leaves, of a most delicate green, edged with crimson. The flowers are bell-shaped, and of a rich scarlet colour. The richly-flavoured juice of the fruit makes it a most welcome refreshment; and when sour, it is used as vinegar. The seeds are dried, and used in cookery and medicine; the bark is employed in tanning the finer kinds of leather, such as morocco. In October the pistachio trees ripen their loads of smooth nuts, of a beautiful pale bluish colour; the fruit loses much of its beauty in drying, but perhaps improves in flavour.

The vines of Palestine are still peculiarly fine, bearing grapes of an enormous size; those about Mount Lebanon are as large as prunes, and the wines of Lebanon are still so celebrated that we can understand why the prophet Hosea should have derived a comparison from them, when he says, the memorial thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. They are sweet, such wines being most esteemed in the East, as they are more full and rich, and therefore more capable of being

kept. They were formerly appropriated to the use of monarchs and men of rank. On the heights of Lebanon, the vine trails along the ground like the cucumber.

In October, the vintage engages attention, and it must be remembered that, in Moslem countries, vines are chiefly cultivated for the sake of grapes as a table fruit, the followers of Mohammed not being allowed to drink, or consequently to make wine. It is only made by Christians, for their own consumption, or for sale by unscrupulous Moslems.

On Mount Lebanon, Mr. Paxton describes having seen a most noble threshing-floor; it was on the edge of the plain, covering a large space of several acres, and comprised about a dozen or twenty floors, without any partition between them. On some, people were employed in threshing corn, others separating the chaff from the wheat; on others lay great piles of grain, some clean and others mixed with the chaff and straw. They separate the wheat by throwing it up and letting the wind blow the chaff away. For this they must of course wait for a wind. The threshing instrument is a board about three feet in width, three inches in thickness, and six to eight feet in length; at the ends it is turned up a little like a sleigh. On the under side many holes are cut in it, and in these are fastened pieces of stone, flint, or iron,

which project nearly an inch from the face of the board, and serve as teeth to tear the ears of the corn in pieces.

Oxen are fastened to the front of these boards, and driven round the floor, drawing the instrument after them, the drivers sitting or standing on it. The oxen are without muzzles, and often as they pass round they take up a few straws and feed on them. Mules, donkeys, and, at times, the camel are used in bringing the grain to the floor, and carrying away the straw. Oats are not cultivated by the Arabs; they feed their horses entirely on barley and straw, the latter indeed, is the usual fodder of the Holy Land, where grass is never made into hay.

In the month of January, the groves and meadows of Palestine are adorned in great profusion with the blossoms of different species of anemone, ranunculus, crocus, tulip, narcissus, lily, and violet. Monconys mentions particularly, between Lebanon and the sea, a green meadow covered with anemonies. The orange trees on the plain of the coast are, in February, loaded with fruit, and here it may be remarked that no oranges are finer than those of the Palestine coast. After the second week in March, every tree is in full leaf, and the apricot, almond, apple, and pear-blossoms give a peculiar beauty to the plains. The tall waving cypresses of the coast,

during this month, engage the attention of travellers, from the peculiarly bright green of their leaves. The cypress is said to be the only tree that grows close to the summit of Lebanon, but, being checked by the cold, it does not there grow in a pyramidal form, but like a small oak. The date-palm, which is an evergreen, also blossoms in March, and the carob perfects its fruit, the husks of which are supposed to be those mentioned in the parable of the prodigal son, as the food of swine.

The young fruit of the fig-tree also appears this month, having the imperfect flowers enclosed within it; and, as the spring advances, numerous and various are the flowers and shrubs that deck the face of Nature in Palestine. Among these seven or eight arums may be found. In most of the arums, the root, although highly acrimonious in its raw state, becomes, when dressed, both palatable and nutritious. This is so well-known in Palestine, that one species of Egyptian arum, is carefully cultivated on this account. In the early part of the month of May showers are sometimes known to fall, but from the end of it to September, rain is unknown in this country. Hail-storms are common at this season, and the hail-stones are often of enormous size; Russell mentions having seen at Aleppo stones two inches in diameter; irregularly

shaped pieces of ice are sometimes found among them, weighing twenty drachms. These hail-storms often make terrible havoc with the windows, and glazed frames which are often employed in winter to shut up the great divan facing the court-yard. About 1200 panes of glass in one seraglio have been broken in a short hail-storm. This fact illustrates the descriptions of storms of hail contained in the Holy Scriptures.

The arbutus is a very common shrub in Palestine, attaining a greater size than it does in our latitudes, the trunk being sometimes six feet in circumference. Lord Lindesay speaks of the arbutus as one of the three trees which principally give a wooded character to the hills of Gilead and Bashan, the other two are the oak and the fir.

Captains Irby and Mangles observed a curious tree in this part of Palestine, bearing bunches of fruit resembling the currant in shape, and the plum in colour. They had a pleasant and aromatic taste, exactly resembling mustard, and if taken in any quantity produce an irritability of the nose and eyes like that which is caused by taking mustard. The leaves of the tree have the same pungent flavour as the fruit, although not so strong. They thought it probable that this, and not the mustard plant of the north, is the tree alluded to by our Saviour, in the parable of the

mustard seed; for although they met with this plant growing wild, as high as the horses' heads, still, being an annual, it did not merit the name of a "tree." Whereas the other is really such, and birds might, and actually do, take shelter under its shadow. The Jewish writers speak of a mustard-tree, common among them, in corresponding terms, seeming to show that a species of the *sinapis*, or some allied genus, existed in Palestine, with which we are not well acquainted, and which may very probably prove to be that which Captain Mangles has pointed out. It is to be regretted that he has not acquainted us with its name. But it is in all probability the plant known to botanists under that of *Salvadora Persica*, a shrub belonging to the Goose-foot tribe.

CHAPTER XV.

In the mountains of Lebanon are rich mines of iron, and in their vicinity coal has lately been discovered. These are worked by the pacha, but the difficulty of access and consequent cost of transport, must make the undertaking one of very doubtful result: at first mules were employed, but a rail-road is in contemplation to convey it to Beirout, and there establish a depot. "The descent," says Dr. Bowring, "is long and precipitous from the village of Cornail, and the mines appear in a very unsafe state, for our candles were frequently extinguished, and the oppression of the atmosphere was great. The galleries enter the mountain horizontally, and the quantity of coal is considerable, but rather of a sulphureous quality. The number of workmen is 114, who are paid three piastres (sevenpence-halfpenny) per day, and who work in two relays, both day and night. The whole of the operations were under the direction of an Englishman, but he has been superseded by a Turk, who appeared to have but little knowledge or experience to fit him for the

discharge of his duties." Coal has certainly not at any previous time been used in Syria, and for the want of this substantial article of fuel, the inhabitants of Palestine, and, indeed, of most of the countries of Western Asia are driven to the sparing use of fires in winter, and to the employment of any article as fuel, which is not too valuable to be so appropriated. Fires, in fact, are so inadequately used in winter, that it is said, an Englishman is likely to suffer far more from cold in the mildest winter climates of Western Asia than in his own land. Warm indoor clothing, and crowding round miserable and unwholesome braziers of charcoal are the chief remedies. Open fires of wood, or aught else, or even chimneys, are rarely found, save in the kitchens, and among the poorer classes, who must warm themselves at the same fire that serves for cooking.

Near the top of Lebanon, towards the west, Mr. Paxton speaks of having seen a small spot of fine white marble; much of the rock, indeed, has the character of marble, and the quarries of the mountain anciently supplied materials for the noblest buildings of the Hebrews. Thence did Solomon bring "the great stones, the costly stones, and the hewn stones," needful for the erection of the temple. "But what," he adds, "gave us most interest were the shells which we found at many

places as we ascended, and also on the top itself. We found some very fine specimens of them, four or more varieties. I procured several, nearly as large as a common conch shell: all of them were petrified. At various places on the side, and also on the summit, we saw rocks that appeared little else than a mass of shells." The more usual and valuable produce of the mountains of Lebanon, is the silk. Much of the best ground is planted with the mulberry-tree, the leaf of which is used for feeding the worms. Not much of the silk is manufactured here, as most of it is exported to Italy, France, and England.

The big-tailed sheep may be seen here, either singly, or two or three together, with a string round their necks, by which they are fastened when at the house, and led and managed when at pasture. They are about the usual size, but around the root of the tail is a large mass of soft loose flesh or fat, which appears to be but loosely connected with the body, except as kept in connexion with it by the skin. It hangs loose like the udder of a cow, and has altogether a very strange appearance. The goats are often seen in flocks with their keepers, but the sheep are usually seen singly. They are led about in the gardens and vineyards, and out on the mountain side, wherever a tuft of grass is to

be found, by a boy or girl. In the evening the sheep are often brought to the pools and springs of water, where water is plentifully poured over them to cool them, a process which the sheep take very kindly. The goats are valued for their milk, and are seen in considerable numbers; some of them have very long ears hanging down from eight to twelve inches. The camel is much used as a beast of burden, and shares with the donkey and mule the hard service which the people of these lands exact of their cattle.

Bears appear to have been, in ancient times, common in Palestine, and to have been much dreaded by the inhabitants for their ferocity, infesting the roads, and even the neighbourhood of towns. They have now become rare, and are scarcely mentioned in modern travels, being almost confined to the mountains and their environs, particularly those of Lebanon. La Roque states that in his time they were very numerous upon the higher Lebanon mountains, from which they descended by night in search of prey, and occasioned serious apprehension to travellers. Naturalists tell us, that during summer the bears of Lebanon remain in the vicinity of the snows, but descend in winter to the neighbourhood of the gardens and villages. The Syrian bear frequently preys on animals, but for the most part prefers vegetables, and whole fields of

chick-pea and other crops, are frequently laid waste by it.

The wolf is no longer common in Palestine, but still there is no part in which it is not occasionally seen, and the flocks suffer in consequence.

Jackals are far more numerous in Palestine than either wolves or foxes, and congregate in great numbers, howling incessantly from sun-set to sun-rise. They enter the streets to seek for offal, robbing the hen-roosts, entering out-houses, devouring all the carrion in their way, digging their way even into the sepulchres of the dead, and in the fruit season, in common with foxes, seeking the vineyards, and fattening on grapes. They are silent by day, never appearing in troops, and if a solitary individual is met with, it always runs away as if in fear.

Various travellers in Palestine have noticed tigers, leopards, panthers, ounces, but by all these names, one and the same animal is intended, and that is a leopard, one of the most beautiful of its tribe. It is met with frequently in and about Lebanon, and stories are current of its attacking travellers in the night. It is among the animals of Mount Tabor, and has been noticed near the lake of Tiberias. This leopard is frequently mentioned in Scripture. Solomon speaks of the "Mountains of the Leopards," and in

the Scriptural topography of Palestine several names occur, which being formed from the name of the leopard (*nimr*), appear to intimate that the localities indicated were the peculiar haunts of these animals. It is even not unlikely that "the mighty hunter, Nimrod," derived his name from this animal.

The jerboa, that miniature kangaroo without the pouch, abounds in Syria, living in burrows, which it makes with its teeth and nails. This animal, about as large as a cat, possessing the longest hind legs of any quadrupeds, while the fore legs are proportionably short, takes prodigious leaps of forty-five feet at a time, with tail horizontally extended. The tail is necessary to this mode of progression, and those who are deprived of it, are unable to leap, or even to maintain the upright position, which is natural to them, and in which, like the squirrel, they feed, assisted by their fore feet. They are exceedingly shy, and can only be killed by surprise. The Arabs take them by stopping up the burrows except at one entrance: they eat the flesh, and use the skin as fur. A modern traveller describes one of the plains he crossed in the Lebanon range as being everywhere so honeycombed by the burrows of the jerboa as to render riding dangerous, the ground frequently giving way under the feet of the dromedaries. The

rabbit being very rare in Palestine, this animal has been supposed to be the coney of Scripture, though some naturalists give the preference to the Syrian hyrax. This, in appearance, resembles a guinea-pig. It is common in the deserts, where it lives upon the scanty herbage which it finds, and as it does not burrow in the earth, its feet, not being calculated for that purpose, it conceals itself in the natural holes or clefts which it finds in the rocks.

Among birds the golden oriole and the cuckoo are among the winter residents of Syria, to which they come in autumn, and depart in spring. Buckingham tells us, that early in April, as he was travelling across the mountains of Damascus to Sidon, he heard the voice of the cuckoo, loud, distinct, and clear, at the time the ground was covered with deep snow. The Arabs call it Tier-El-Yakoob, or Jacob's bird, from supposing it to utter the name of that Patriarch, the Arabic sound of which, indeed, its note closely resembles.

A recent missionary to the Holy Land speaks of having seen Mount Lebanon under a singularly picturesque appearance. "Standing off the coast of Saide and Beirout, we had a brilliant view of the illuminations which take place on the mountain on the eve of the festival of the Holy Cross. From north to south there was, in a crescent form, an exhibition of lights, which increased in

brilliancy as the darkness of evening came on. Some of them rose to a very considerable height above the horizon, marking the great elevation of the mountains; I counted fifty. These large fires were lighted at the monasteries and churches; this ceremony took place throughout the whole of Mount Lebanon, from Tripoli to Tyre, and in various other parts. Considering that our view was partial, we may calculate that not fewer perhaps than 500 such fires were lighted."

CHAPTER XVI.

MOUNT MORIAH.

THE "Land of Moriah," mentioned in Genesis xxii. 2, is supposed to mean all the mountains on which, and in their hollows, Jerusalem was afterwards erected, and these mountains were called "Moriah," or Vision, because, being high lands, they could be seen afar off; but afterwards the name was appropriated to the most elevated part, on which Solomon built his celebrated temple, on the site of which now stands the mosque of Omar.

The mountain is a rocky limestone hill, steep of ascent on every side except the north; and on the other side it is surrounded by a group of hills in the form of an amphitheatre, which situation rendered it secure from the earthquakes that appear to have been frequent in the Holy Land. When drawing near Jerusalem from the valley of Elah, Mr. Paxton observes; "We passed a district where an immense quantity of stone had

been quarried and removed; the refuse stone lay in piles, and the excavations showed that large quantities had been procured. The face of the high ridge, or kind of table-land over which we now passed, was almost wholly destitute of vegetation. A few thistles and an occasional small thorn bush might be seen, but a more naked district I had not met with in the Holy Land. Several miles to the right, I saw a hill or hills pretty well covered with trees of some sort, olives, I thought, from their appearance; and at a greater distance on our left, I saw several patches of trees on the side of a high and long ridge, and a small village or two near them; but more immediately about me, and over the whole face of the naked ridge I was passing, all was naked, all was destitute of vegetation, except a small enclosed spot. I was struck not only with the absence of vegetation, but with the enormous quantity of rough rock that almost literally covered the surface of the ground. Much of it lay in irregular patches projecting from eighteen inches to five or six feet in height above the little earth that could be seen. It really appeared as if the district was given up to be occupied by rocks to the exclusion of all other matter."

In the time of David, Mount Moriah stood apart from the city, and was richly cultivated; here was the threshing-floor of Araunah the

Jebusite, bought by David, and on which he raised an altar to God, 2 Sam. xxiv. 15-25. At the time when Solomon built his temple, it had become included within the walls of the city: it was on Mount Moriah that Abraham, more than eight hundred years before this period, was directed by Jehovah to offer his only son in sacrifice. "There is, perhaps, no event in the Old Testament, which more powerfully enlists the sympathies of our nature than the affecting narrative of the trial of Abraham's faith. The order of words in the original," says Bishop Warburton, "gradually increases the sense, and raises the passions higher and higher. 'Take now thy son, thy only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac.' Every word seems calculated to awaken some painful feeling, and to increase the difficulty of compliance. But he who before staggered not at the promise, staggers not now at the precept through unbelief."

The mosque built by the Caliph Omar, which now occupies a spot of so much interest, is regarded with the greatest veneration by the Mohammedans, and to this day the Koran or the sword is the doom of any intruder. At its northern extremity is the golden gate, for many years closed, and flanked with a tower, in which a Mussulman soldier is constantly on guard; for the Turks believe that, by that gate, the Christians

will one day enter, and obtain possession of the city. Venerable as is the spot to both Jew and Christian, neither can now tread its precincts. Dr. Richardson, however, an English physician, whose skill and profession rendered him generally acceptable, obtained permission to explore this splendid monument of Saracenic magnificence. He beheld the beautifully gilded ceilings, the marble walls and pillars, the well where the worshippers drink and wash, and the ancient Koran or Mohammedan Scriptures. He was even permitted to "put his hand through a hole, to feel the pretended print of the Prophet's foot, and to feel as well as to see the pretended marks of the angel Gabriel's fingers, over which is suspended a fine curtain of green cloth and satin, the sacred colour of the Turks." The mosque is said to be very striking at a distance, and to lose nothing of its grandeur or beauty on a near approach. The spacious paved courts, the flights of steps, and surrounding arcades, the tall dark cypress trees and running fountains, and the large octagonal body of the mosque, with its surrounding domes, produce altogether the finest effect, and increase the desire to enter its forbidden walls. It is said to be the most magnificent piece of architecture in the Turkish empire; far superior to the mosque of St. Sophia, in Constantinople. By the sides of the spacious area in which it stands

are several vaulted remains; and it is said that evidence can be produced to prove that they belonged to the foundation of Solomon's temple. Chateaubriand says, that he was strongly tempted to find some mode of penetrating to the interior of the mosque, but was deterred by the fear that he might thereby involve the whole Christian population of Jerusalem in destruction. Here the Moslem in his pride, takes his evening walk, to the envy of the excluded Christian and Jew. On the mount and north of it, along the outside of the city walls, is the Turkish burying-place, while the Jews bury on Mount Olivet, and the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and the Christians on Mount Sion. The spring of water which flows from the sides of Mount Moriah is supposed to be the pool of Siloam to which our blessed Saviour directed the blind man to go and wash. "He went, therefore and washed, and came seeing." John ix. 7.

CHAPTER XVII.

MOUNT OF OLIVES.

THE Mount of Olives, so frequently mentioned in the Evangelical history, stretches from north to south, and is about a mile in length. During summer the short grass, which covers its sides in the spring, is withered by the autumnal heats; but the absence of verdure is compensated for by patches, here and there, of the tree to which it owes its name, and with which, formerly, the whole mount and valley were covered. At about two-thirds of the ascent, travellers are shown the place where our Lord, looking down upon the city, wept over its impending fate. "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." How strikingly has this fatal prophecy been fulfilled! Not a vestige remains of the ancient capital of David and Solomon, not a tower, gate, or wall, of Jewish times, is left standing. Without the walls there are indeed

some ancient sepulchral monuments of doubtful date; but even these have been entered and defiled, as if the destruction pronounced on this fated city extended even to the asylums of her dead.

From this point the best panoramic view of the holy city is obtained, the slope of the hill, from west to east, being just sufficient to present it to the greatest advantage. The interior of the court of the temple is distinctly seen, with the celebrated mosque of Omar rising in its centre, occupying the site of its more august predecessor. Behind, the domes of the sanctuary of the Holy Sepulchre and other churches, minarets, convents and mosques rise in pleasing succession; and though the Jerusalem of modern times is not the city of the Scriptures, any more than that it is built upon the same spot, yet, as seen from hence the "widowed daughter of Zion," still displays sufficient grandeur to aid the imagination in painting her, as she once existed, "the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth."

The view from the western slopes of the Mount of Olives is, as a picture only, extremely magnificent; colour, form, composition, all are in the finest order; but the mind, however touched by these, soon turns to more hallowing associations. From the eastern side the view is equally

extensive and delightful, embracing, as it does, so many interesting Scripture localities, such as the chain of the mountains of Moab, and parts of the Dead Sea, the valley and part of the plains of Jordan; and beyond these, though not admitting of exact distinction, are Bethpeor, Gilead, Pisgah, and the height of Mount Nebo. While to the N. W. stands Ramah, the birth-place of Samuel. In the foreground, on every side, the eye traverses a vast, ocean-like undulation of bare and arid mountain-tops and valleys. At the feet of Mount Olivet runs the deep and venerable valley of Jehoshaphat, so often mentioned under different names by the sacred historians and prophets, and which is sanctified in the memories of men afar off, by the knowledge that its soil contains the dust of thousands of holy and venerable personages, and has been moistened by the tears of prophets, and the blood of saints. Who knows not, also, that this valley was often traversed by David, and by our blessed Saviour, whenever they crossed the brook of Kedron, or ascended Mount Olivet; or that it is the peculiar and awful distinction of this valley, that Jews, Mohammedans, and many Christians live and die in the persuasion that this is the "valley of decision, the valley to which all the nations shall be gathered in the great and terrible day of final judgment. La-

martine describes this spot as enclosed on the north by dark and barren heights which contained the sepulchres of kings, shaded on the west by the heavy and gigantic walls of a city of iniquities, and overhung at the east by the summit of the Mount of Olives. At some paces' distance, a black and bare rock detaches itself like a promontory from the base of the mountain, and suspended over Kedron, and the valley itself, contains several old tombs of patriarchs and kings, formed in a gigantic and singular style of architecture. In the time of our Saviour, no doubt, the sloping sides of the Mount, now nearly bare, were watered by brooks from the pools, and in the rainy season by the running stream of Kedron. Gardens of olive, orange, and pomegranate trees, covered with a thicker shade the narrow valley of Gethsemane, which sinks like a sanctuary of grief into the darkest depth of the valley of Jehoshaphat." The tombs mentioned by Lamartine, are not the sole memorials of the dead, for the sides of the valley are almost paved with white and black sepulchral stones, by thousands and tens of thousands, for this is the place where, three thousand years ago, the Jew buried his dead under the shadow of his Temple; and this custom he has ever since retained, because this is holy ground, and because it is held that men shall in this vale rise at the last day, to

honour or shame. The Jew journeys in his old age from the uttermost parts of the earth, that when he dies, his bones may be laid in this valley of his fathers' sepulchres.

The brook Kedron, which traverses the length of this valley, is now become a mere winter torrent, quite dry for the greater part of the year.

The Mount of Olives will seem to many of our readers, perhaps, one of the most interesting localities in the world. The marks and boundaries of Jerusalem itself have been so altered in the course of ages, that it would be difficult to fix upon any spot, which may be supposed to present, even nearly, the same appearance it did in the time of our Saviour. But respecting the Mount of Olives there is no doubt or question. In all the changes of time and of possessors it has continued to retain its name, and to exhibit the perennial green of the tree from which that name was derived. There is much reason to conclude that, even in its surface, it is now little different from what it was in that day when King David went up its ascent, "weeping and barefoot," or that latter day, when the Son of Man was wont to resort thither, when from thence he wept over the doomed city, whose "goodly buildings" he had viewed,—and when at last he ascended

thence, to resume his place "at the right hand of the Majesty on High." That any of the olive trees now found there should have existed in the time of Christ, can scarcely be considered probable. Yet there are eight old trees on the lower slope of the mountain towards the brook Kedron, standing in the supposed site of the Garden of Gethsemane (which means oil-press), to which this ancient date is ascribed by the monks, and which are, in consequence, regarded with great veneration by the pilgrims. "They are," says Dr. Wilde, "undoubtedly the largest, and I may add with safety, the most ancient olive trees in the world. The largest is twenty-four feet in girth above its roots, though its topmost branch is not thirty feet from the ground. The trunks of most of them are hollow in the centre, and built up with stones. There is nothing unnatural in assigning an age of nineteen centuries to these patriarchs of the vegetable kingdom, whose growth is the slowest of any in existence. They have not borne fruit for many years past, but, though their trunks are greatly decayed, yet, from the hardness of the wood, and each part being so retentive of life, there is still a considerable head to each, whose light-coloured silky leaves hang like so many silver locks over their time-worn and aged stems, that now, in the evening of life, are fast tottering to decay." To this

theory it has been objected that, according to the testimony of Josephus, all the trees within some distance of Jerusalem, were cut down by the Romans, to be employed in the works raised against the devoted city; but this again has been refuted by the fact that the timber of the olive tree would have been of little or no value in constructing engines and battering-rams, and that these trees in particular must then have been so slender, that the besiegers would have considered them unfit for any such purpose. "It is," says Dr. Clarke, "a curious and interesting fact, that, during a period of little more than two thousand years, Hebrews, Assyrians, Romans, Moslems, and Christians, have been successively in possession of the rocky mountains of Palestine; yet the olive, still vindicates its paternal soil, and is found at this day upon the spot which was called by the Hebrews, Mount Olivet, or the Mount of Olives, eleven centuries before the Christian era," Zech. xiv. 4. One of the three summits into which the mountain is divided, is over against the village of Siloam, and is composed of bare rock, in which many cisterns are cut. Another is known as the Mount of Offence, or the hill of corruption, as the supposed site of the idol temples which King Solomon constructed for his heathen wives. On the third is a remark-

able cavern with a single entrance at the top, like that at the mouth of a well. Cavern-worship, especially on the summits of mountains, formed part of the pagan rites of Ashtaroth and other gods of the heathen, and it is conjectured that this was constructed by one of the idolatrous kings of Judah, for the use of his misguided people. A pathway leads directly over the Mount to the village of Bethany on the other side, that place of sacred and memorable resort, where, after our Lord had, for the last time on earth, led his disciples, Acts i. 5, "It came to pass that while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven."—Luke xxiv. verse 51.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MOUNT OF PRECIPITATION.

THE little vale of Nazareth, in which our Saviour passed his early years, is a kind of hollow or basin, formed by enclosing mountains of no great height. "It seems," says Dr. Richardson, "as if fifteen mountains met to form one enclosure for this delightful spot. They rise round it like the edge of a shell, to guard it from intrusion. It is a rich and beautiful field in the midst of barren mountains, abounding in fig-trees, small gardens, and hedges of the prickly pear, the dense grass affording an ample pasture. The village stands on an elevated situation on the western side of the valley, and contains between six and seven hundred people." This picture is in agreement with that which other travellers have drawn, but Lord Lindesay thinks them all too highly coloured.

About a mile and a half distant from Nazareth, is the Mount of Precipitation, as it is now

called, a hill, though not very lofty, yet still steep and overhanging. "The eye," says Mr. Jowett, "naturally wanders over its summit, in quest of some point from which it might probably be, that the men of this place endeavoured to cast our Saviour down; but in vain, no rock adapted to such an object appears. At the foot of this hill, is a modest simple plain, surrounded by low hills, reaching in length nearly a mile; in breadth, near the city, one hundred and fifty yards, but farther on, about four hundred yards. On this plain there are a few olive and fig-trees, scarcely sufficient to make the place picturesque. Then follows a ravine which gradually grows deeper and narrower, till after walking about another mile, you find yourself in an immense chasm, with steep rocks on either side from whence you behold, as it were, beneath your feet, and before you, the noble plain of Esdraelon. Nothing can be finer than the apparently immeasurable prospect of this plain, bounded to the south by the mountains of Samaria. The elevation of the hills on which the spectator stands in this ravine, is very great, and the whole scene, when we saw it, was clothed in the most rich mountain-blue colour that can be conceived. At this spot, on the right hand of the ravine, is shown the rock to which the men of Nazareth are supposed to have conducted our Lord, for

the purpose of throwing him down. With the Testament in our hands, we endeavoured to examine the probabilities of the spot; and I confess that there was not the least ground for incredulity.

"The rock here is perpendicular for about fifty feet, down which space it would be easy to hurl a person, who should unawares be brought to the summit, and his perishing would be a very certain consequence. That the spot might be at a considerable distance from the city, is an idea not inconsistent with St. Luke's account; for the expression, thrusting Jesus out of the city, and leading him 'to the brow of the hill on which their city was built,' gives fair scope for imagining, that, in their rage and debate, the Nazarenes might, without orginally intending his murder, press upon him for a considerable distance after they had quitted the synagogue. The distance, as already stated, from modern Nazareth to this spot is scarcely two miles—a space which, in the fury of persecution, might soon be passed over. Indeed it is by no means certain, but that Nazareth may at that time have extended through the principal part of the plain, which lies before the modern town; in this case the distance passed over might not exceed a mile. The word hill has in many other passages of Scripture, a much larger sense, denoting sometimes a range of

mountains, and in some cases, a whole mountainous district. In all these cases the singular word Gebel (hill) is used according to the idiom of this country; thus Gebel Carmel, or Mount Carmel, is a range of mountains; Gebel Libnan, or Mount Lebanon, is a mountainous district of more than fifty miles in length. And thus any person coming from Jerusalem, and entering on the plain of Esdraelon, would, if asking the name of that bold line of mountains which bounds the north side of the plain, be informed that it was Gebel Nasra, the Hill of Nazareth, though in English we should call them the Mountains of Nazareth. Now the spot shown, as illustrating Luke iv. 29, is, in fact, on the very brow of this lofty ridge of mountains; in comparison of which the hill upon which the modern town is built, is but a gentle eminence."

In one of the valleys near this spot is a fountain which bears the name of the Virgin Mary, and where the women are seen passing to and fro with pitchers on their heads, as in days of old. "It is justly remarked," says the Rev. Hartwell Horne, "that if there be a spot throughout the Holy Land, which was more particularly honoured by the presence of Mary, we may consider this to be the place; because the situation of a copious spring is not liable to change, and because the custom of repairing hither to draw water has been

continued among the female inhabitants of Nazareth from the earliest period of its history."

Robinson tells us that in the south-west part of the town is a small Maronite church, under a precipice of the hill, which here breaks off in a perpendicular wall, forty or fifty feet in height. Several such precipices occur in the western hill, around the village, and he, with very good reason, concludes that one of these, probably the one just indicated, may well have been the spot whither the Jews led Jesus, unto the brow of the hill, that they might cast him down headlong, and not the precipice two miles from the village, mentioned by Mr. Jowett, and which monkish tradition indicates to the traveller as the Mount of Precipitation.

Large herds of mountain goats are met with in these mountainous regions, as well as on the plain of the Jordan. They are the Steinbock, or Bouquetin of the Swiss and Tyrol Alps, and pasture in flocks of forty or fifty together; great numbers are killed by the people, who hold their flesh in high estimation. They sell the large knotty horns to the Hebron merchants, who carry them to Jerusalem, where they are worked into handles for knives and daggers. Mr. Burckhardt saw a pair of these horns at Kerek, three feet and a half in length. The Arabs told him that 'it is very difficult to get a shot at the animal,

and that the hunters hide themselves among the reeds on the banks of streams, where the goats resort to drink; that when pursued, they will throw themselves from a height of fifty feet and more, alighting on their heads without receiving any injury." The same fact is asserted by the hunters in the Alps; the flesh is excellent, and has nearly the same flavour as that of the deer. They may be hunted with dogs in the plains, but these cannot come up with them among the rocks, where they can take leaps of twenty feet with great ease.

CHAPTER XIX.

QUARANTANIA.

THE road from Jerusalem to the plain of Jericho, after a few miles, leads to and traverses the sternest and most desolate mountain wilderness in all Palestine. The ridge of mountains in this singular district which immediately faces the plain, forming part of the mountains which enclose the valley of the Jordan, is the highest in Judea. They bear the name of Quarantania, from an ancient opinion that the wilderness which they form was that in which our Saviour remained for forty days fasting, after he had been baptized in the river Jordan; and that the loftiest summit of the ridge is that "exceeding high mountain" from which the devil showed him "all the kingdoms on the world and the glory of them" (Matt. iv. 8). Speaking of this wild region, Maundrell says, "I am persuaded that there are few deserts in the world so frightful as this; and I am compelled to acknowledge

that melancholy as are the vast solitudes of Arabia Petræa, which I traversed in my journey from Egypt to Sinai, they are altogether pleasant to this." Maundrell bears similar testimony, "A most miserable, barren, and dry place, consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn and disordered, as if the earth had suffered some great convulsion in which its very bowels had been turned outward." The snow falls thick and lies long on these mountains and high intervening plains, but from its peculiarly low, level and inclosed situation, the whole valley of the Jordan enjoys remarkably mild winter climate.

Mariti adduces and confirms the opinion of Josephus, who reports that the winter of the plain of Jericho resembled spring, and that the inhabitants were clothed in linen garments at the same time it even snowed in other parts of Judea. It appears generally, that when the sun does not shine, that the day is often exceedingly warm although the night has been frosty. The Scriptures contain allusions to this, Gen. xxxi. 40, Jer. xxxvi. 30. The ascent of the Mount of Temptation is so difficult and perilous, that many travellers of no ordinary enterprise have made attempts to reach its summit, but have desisted. Of this number was Hasselquist, who describes the mountain as "high and pointed, and on our left, as we ascended, the rock was per-

pendicularly steep. It consists of a loose white limestone, mixed with another, which is greyish and harder. The way up to its highest point is dangerous beyond imagination, narrow, steep, full of rocks and stones, over which we were obliged to creep; the difficulty increased by the valley on one side, which, besides its terrible aspect, is most dangerous, as, in case any one should slip, his death must be certain. I went as far on this terrible mountain as prudence would permit, but ventured not to the summit." He probably did not reach more than about half way up this mountain, an ascent which is attended with more fatigue than risk. The higher part presents obstacles so formidable, that the few pilgrims who have attained the summit describe it as a most perilous undertaking. The view from the top, however, well repays the fatigue and danger of the enterprise. It embraces the whole extent of the Dead Sea, and beyond it the plains of Moab and Mount Pisgah, whence Moses beheld the promised land, while just under the eye are the plains of Jericho, and the river Jordan. Like the others of the same ridge, Quarantania has on its top the remains of an old chapel, and the eastern side is full of grots and caves, of various forms and size, which have alternately offered secure retreats to fugitives, recluses, and robbers. Such caves are indeed most numerous

among the steep and rugged mountains at the northern extremity of the Dead Sea, on this side the Jordan; which, except in being of much less elevation, offer the same essential characteristics as the mountain of Quarantania.

On Mr. Carne's visit to Jericho, he says, "we were too much fatigued to visit the Jordan this day, but in the evening we walked to the fountain at the foot of the mountain Quarantania, which has ever been venerated as the same that the prophet Elisha purified 'whose waters were bitter and the ground barren.'" It is a beautiful fountain, and gushing forth with a full rapid stream falls into a large and limpid pool, whence several streams flow over the plain. The fruitfulness of the neighbourhood, which is covered with a rich verdure and many trees, and well cultivated, arises chiefly from the vicinity of this celebrated fountain, the waters of which are remarkably sweet. The plain, about six miles wide and enclosed by ranges of mountains, as far as Tiberias, a distance of three days' journey, has a rich soil, and delightful aspect, the Jordan's course through it being perfectly straight.

MOUNTS SINAI AND HOREB.

CHAPTER XX.

MOUNTS SINAI AND HOREB.

THE Peninsula formed by the two branches in which the gulf called the Red Sea terminates, constitutes part of the wild and desolate region of Arabia Petræa, or Arabia the Stony, which took its name from the capital of Edom Petra (a rock). In the central part of this peninsula stands the group of the Sinai mountains, to which such great celebrity has been given by its connexion with several important circumstances in the migrations of the Israelites from Egypt to Palestine. The upper nucleus of this range of mountains, composed almost entirely of granite, forms a rocky wilderness of an irregularly circular shape, intersected by many narrow valleys, and is from thirty to forty miles in diameter. It contains the highest mountains of the Peninsula, whose shaggy and pointed peaks, and steep and shattered sides, render it clearly distinguishable from all the rest of the country in view. It is in this region that the

fertile valleys are found which produce fruit-trees. Water also abounds in this district, on which account it is the place of refuge for all the Bedouins when the low country is parched up. Its advantage in this respect, may have operated in the selection of the spot for the encampment of the Israelites, who remained here nearly a year; for there seems little doubt but that this upper country or wilderness formed exclusively the desert of Sinai, so often mentioned in the course of their wanderings. It is perhaps impossible to ascertain with distinctness which of the different elevations comprised in this chain, form "the Horeb," where Moses received the call to his great work, or the "Sinai," where the tables of the law were committed to his hands. A great deal of discussion has taken place on this point, some writers placing it on a part known as Mount Catharine, others considering that a high peak called Mount Serbal is the Holy Mount, while Dr. Robinson fixes on another spot. Such discussions it is here not necessary to enter upon, our attention must be confined to that part of the group to which the distinction is restricted by local traditions and religious establishments, and to which the descriptions of travellers more particularly refer. The sacred part of the Sinai group consists of two adjoining elevations, or perhaps we should say, one mountain with two

summits, respectively known as "Gebel Mousa" (Mount Moses) and "Gebel Katerin (Mount Catharine), the former being in common opinion Sinai and the latter Horeb. The more elevated summit of Mount Serbal was in very early times considered to have been the sacred mountain, and was the chief place of pilgrimage in the peninsula. Its proximity to Egypt may at one period have caused it to be considered as the Horeb of pilgrims. At present neither the monks of Sinai nor those of Cairo consider Mount Serbal as the scene of any of the events of Sacred History, nor have the Bedouins any tradition respecting it, "but it is possible," says Mr. Burckhardt, that, "if the Byzantine writers were thoroughly examined, some mention might be found of this mountain, which I believe was never before visited by any European traveller."

Mount Serbal has in all five peaks: the two highest are to the east, one of which Burckhardt ascended. These rise like cones, and are distinguishable from a great distance, particularly on the road from Suez. The ascent is very difficult, and Burckhardt was completely exhausted by the time he reached the lower summit, to climb which took him no less than twelve hours. Here there is a small plain with some trees, and the ruins of a reservoir for water. After reposing here for a while, the enterprising traveller

ascended the eastern peak, and reached its top, after great exertion; for the rock is so smooth and slippery, besides being steep, that although barefooted he was obliged frequently to crawl prostrate, to avoid being precipitated below, and had he not casually met with a few shrubs to grasp, he would have been obliged to abandon the attempt, or have rolled down the cliff. The summit of this eastern peak consists of one enormous mass of granite, the smoothness of which is broken by only a few partial fissures, presenting an appearance not unlike the ice-covered tops of the Alps. The sides of this peak, at a few paces below its top, are formed of large insulated blocks, thirty to forty feet long, which appear as if just suspended in the act of rushing down the steep. Near the top, steps are regularly formed with large loose stones, which must have been brought from below; and so judiciously are they arranged, that they have resisted the encroachments of time, and may still be used for the ascent. These steps are the continuation of a regular path from the bottom of the mountain, which is in several parts cut through the rock with great labour. The eastern peak, which from below looks as sharp as a needle, has a platform on its summit forming a circle about twelve feet in diameter. Just below the top, every granite block that presents a smooth surface bears in-

scriptions, the greater part of which are illegible. Similar inscriptions are found on the sides of the small caverns, which exist between the masses of stone, and are large enough to accommodate a few persons. As the eye is very apt to be deceived in estimating the relative height of mountains, Burckhardt hesitates to give any positive opinion as to that of Mount Serbal; but it seemed to him to be higher than all the peaks, including Jebel Moussa and very little lower than the Mount St. Catharine.

The inscriptions mentioned by Burckhardt were most probably the work of pilgrims about the sixth century, at a time when Mount Serbal was regarded as the true Sinai of the sacred writings. The principal display of such inscriptions, is found in the Wady Mokatteb, or Written Valley, which lies on the most frequented road to Serbal and Sinai, and where the cliffs are so situated as to afford a fine shelter to travellers during the mid-day hours. This valley extends for about three hours' march in the north-west direction; in the upper part it is three miles across. The cliffs and rocks are thickly covered with inscriptions, which are continued with intervals of a few hundred paces only, for at least six miles. Some of these are cut at a height which must have required the assistance of a ladder to

reach. Among them are many in Greek, containing probably, like the others, the names of those who passed this way while engaged in their pilgrimage to the holy mountain; some of the latter contain Jewish names in Greek characters. A vast number of drawings of mountain goats, and camels, the latter being sometimes represented as laden, and with riders on their backs, are also visible. Crosses, too, may be seen, indicating that the inscribers were Christians.

The terms Horeb and Sinai are indiscriminately applied by the sacred writers to the scene of the same transaction, and this has led to the conclusion that, as in the now recognised spot, the two must be twin summits of the same mountain. A conclusion which is of doubtful foundation, as it is not clear that "Horeb" is used as the name of a mountain at all, but rather of the rocky district in which the mountain Sinai stood. It is, however, of no great importance that we should be able to fix upon the precise spot on which it pleased God to make known His Law to man; there is no doubt that it was somewhere on this range of mountains, which have been consequently rendered almost equally venerable in the eyes of Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans. It should be borne in mind

that the name Sinai is derived from an Arabic word, signifying "a bush," and evidently bears allusion to the miraculous appearance of the Lord to Moses before he was entrusted with his mission.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE name of St. Catharine was given to Horeb, from a celebrated convent called after this Saint, at the foot of the mountain. It was built by the Emperor Justinian, A.D. 527, on the site where a small church had been erected by the Empress Helena, and dedicated to the Transfiguration; but a few years after, one of the monks pretended to be informed in a dream that the corpse of St. Catharine, who had suffered martyrdom at Alexandria, had been transported by angels to the summit of the highest peak of the surrounding mountains. Whereupon, the monks ascended the mountain in procession, and having found the bones, brought them down, and deposited them in the church. To commemorate such an event, it would seem that nothing less could be done than to call, not only the convent, but the mountain, after St. Catharine.

At this convent travellers put up, and, after some repose there, generally think it their first duty to ascend the summit of Gebel Mousa (Sinai), the road to which commences imme-

diately behind the walls of the convent. Mr. Fisk gives an interesting account of his journey in the Mountains of Sinai, and from it and the narratives of other travellers, we will give a few extracts.

The plain, where it is generally supposed the children of Israel encamped, is of comparatively small dimensions, the soil is a soft sand, and the barrier of mountains that incloses it very steep and rocky. In the middle, and opposite to the valley that leads to Horeb, is a hill, on which tradition says that Moses reared the first altar, and offered the first sacrifices, after the flight from Egypt,— it is still called by his name; it is much lower than the neighbouring eminences, the ascent of which must have offered difficulties too formidable for such a ceremony. "The sandy soil," says Mr. Carne, "as we took our solitary walk through the plain, was still warm to the foot after the heat of the day, and the air was mild and delightful. This had seldom been the case during our journey, for the sharp blasts of the night are more to be dreaded, during this season, than the mid-day sun; the pits which are found dug in the sand, are sometimes a shelter to the Arabs from the fury of the winds, that will not suffer the tents to stand. This may be one reason why the people of Israel encamped so long and often in enclosed valleys, and amidst ranges of lofty mountains, rather than in open, exposed and

extensive plains. In the night, these declivities were a protection from the winds, that often sweep down with great force."

"I feel it difficult," says Mr. Fisk, "to convey to an European mind, an idea of the impressions left upon my own, by a desert route. Its loneliness amidst numbers, its frequent sameness, its hoary antiquity, the dreaminess of the ordinary pace of the camels, the absence of all human habitations, the sense of vast distance from the great world and its civilization, the fewness of incidents, the melancholy chanting of the Arabs towards sunset, the wild, gipsy-like appearance of the bivouac, all combine to form a picture of sensations (if I may be allowed the expression) not easily obliterated by time. Had not the traveller full, undoubting confidence in the integrity of his escort, they would be insupportable. To many a privation he is of necessity exposed, particularly that of fresh water.

"Surely none but those who have thirsted in the desert, have learnt to prize as they ought, the real blessing of good water. It is with this, as with most of the ordinary mercies of God,—they are little esteemed, and awaken, too generally, but slight returns of gratitude, because they are common. Knowing that a desert route such as ours, might, and probably would, expose us to many privations, particularly in regard to fresh

water, I resolved, during one day to try how long I could endure the cravings of thirst, although we had, in our skins and bottles a sufficient supply, though of not very palatable water. From six in the morning till our noontide meal, I was able to abstain without any uncomfortable result. At dinner I took just enough to refresh my lips. During the afternoon and evening march, the sense of thirst became very painful, and when the sun went down it brought no refreshment, I became feverish with a feeling of oppression in my throat, a burning pulsation at the tips of my fingers, and felt a general restlessness of the whole system, while every thought of my mind was associated with running or springing water. Before I could reach the halting station, I called impatiently for drink, rinsed my mouth and took the smallest possible draught, but it was long before the reaction of the system threw off the effects of painful experiment."

The sun also, in these dreary regions, if suffered to act upon the surface, parches the skin, and produces fever, and the experienced traveller in a high temperature, will take care to keep the head thickly covered, so as to be protected against the severity of the vertical sun. Hence, we believe, the adoption of the folds of the turban as an item of Oriental costume. It is desirable to wear flannel, and to keep up, if possible, a continual

perspiration. A desert route, indeed, requires as thick clothing as a winter journey in Europe. "While the sun was bearing down upon us," says Mr. Fisk, "I availed myself of a simple provision which should be strongly recommended to all travellers. Though I had an Arab umbrella of double cotton (which, by the way, was sometimes fatiguing to carry over head long together), a thick turban, with a tarbouch, and cotton skull-cap under it, yet the sun seemed to penetrate through them all. I had provided a piece of thick cotton cloth, about five or six yards long, and two wide, which sometimes served as a sheet by night, when I indulged in such a luxury. I folded this into about a yard square, laid it with all its thickness on the top of my head, brought two of its corners to meet under my chin, and fastened them with a pin, so as to form a hood. One of the other corners fell over my face like a veil, while the other protected the back of my neck. I never really suffered from the heat, after adopting this simple precaution."

The central summits of Mount Sinai, are in view for several days, while approaching them. Abrupt cliffs of granite from six to eight hundred feet in height, whose surface is blackened by the sun surround the avenues leading to the elevated platform, to which the name of Sinai is specifically applied. These cliffs enclose the holy moun-

tain on three sides, leaving the east and north-east sides only, towards the gulf of Akaba more open to the view. On both sides of a thick wood of tamarisk trees, extends a range of low hills of a detritus of the feldspar of granite, which at first sight has all the appearance of pipe-clay; it is brittle, crumbles easily between the fingers, and leaves upon them its colour, which is a pale yellow. The Arabs sell it at Cairo, where it is in request for taking stains out of cloth, and where it serves the poor instead of soap, for washing the hands; but it is chiefly used to rub the skins of asses during summer, being supposed to refresh them, and to defend them against the heat of the sun.

"At length," says a modern traveller, "the venerable object of our desires, Horeb, Sinai the mountain of the Lord, stood before us. Half an hour's progress across the plain brought us within sight of the little Greek convent of St. Catharine, the first human habitation we had seen since quitting Suez. It appeared little more than a white speck, amidst the gloomy vastness of the Sinaite group, a little nest of repose, amidst gigantic tokens of natural convulsion. As we slowly approached from the north, which point presents the best view, we were enabled to form a general idea of this remarkable habitation. It is a somewhat castellated quadrangular building,

with a little show of fortification. Its walls are high, and, though constructed with stones and mud, or clay, which seems never to have attained any very great degree of solidity, are capable of making sufficient resistance against such missiles as Arabs are accustomed to use. In a garden enclosed by a continuation of the convent walls were olives, vines, cypresses, apricots, and other trees, clothed in their bright livery of lovely green. As I gazed upon these refreshing objects I thought I had never before really felt and understood the charm of green as a colour; all appeared so fresh, luxuriant, so cool, in the midst of the wilderness of savage granite by which it was surrounded. Finding the way rough and troublesome we dismounted, and leisurely on foot approached the main entrance, which is on the eastern side; and how awfully did the majestic mountain ranges, right and left, look down upon us. We arrived, and soon were surrounded by a troop of wild and fiery-eyed Bedouin retainers of, and dependents upon, the monks of St. Catharine. 'Backshish, Backshish,' was the general cry while we waited for admission within the convent walls, when our arrival was soon announced, and preparations made for our reception."

"On account of the unmanageable ferocity of the Bedouins in past years, before the friendly footing on which they live with the monks was

established, all usual modes of entrance were blocked up, and in this state they still continue, so that the traveller is admitted by a trap-door, at least thirty feet from the ground, to which he and his baggage are elevated by a kind of crane, from which a rope moved by a windlass within is let down, and in which he seats himself as in a swing; and as everything within the convent moves at a slow and sleepy pace, the ascent is not made with any degree of speed. On reaching this elevated portal, the superior, a pale white-bearded man of middle age, met us with great courtesy, and passing thence down an inclined plane, and a flight of rude steps, and then up another, we reached an open gallery overlooking a great part of the building from which opened off four small cells, conveniently furnished with carpets and cushions, with a little lamp suspended in each, for burning olive-oil during the night. One was assigned to each of us, and a third to our servants: and soon all our desert furniture was gathered together about us, not an article of which was missing. In addition to these things a small sheep had been purchased of the Bedouins, which was dressed and hung up for use, as the provisions afforded by the convent are of the most spare and slender description; animal food of all kinds being forbidden by the rules of the order, though they are permitted the

use of brandy, which they manufacture themselves from dates. While seated at the door of our cells, we were soon waited upon by several monks, one bearing a bason, and another a large ewer of water, with clean white napkins. While we held our hands over the bason, he poured the fresh water upon our parched skin, which afforded a refreshment that was truly delightful. Another brought a bountiful supply of water, fresh and sparkling from the convent well, for drinking. It was almost too delicious, for we had been drinking water little better than diluted mud, for several days previous to our arrival. While our meal was in preparation they served us with a fragrant cup of coffee. The little cells we inhabited had their white-washed walls written over, in many places, with the names of travellers from most parts of Europe, who had from time to time shared like us the hospitality of these kindly monks."

The convent is large, and resembles a small town, containing many buildings, several courts, and store-houses, a mosque with a minaret, and a chapel, celebrated as the richest in the land. The mosque, a singular object in a Christian convent, is said to have been built by Mahomet, who gave the monks a letter of protection, a copy of which is still shown, and the mountain is consequently still visited and highly esteemed by

the Mahometans. The convent has an inexhaustible supply of pure water, from a well, which the brethren point out to the traveller as that of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, to which the great law-giver led his flocks, while he was yet living in obscurity in Midian. The convent has been built on the spot, where, according to tradition, the Almighty first manifested Himself to Moses, and spake to him out of the burning bush.

In a garden of the convent is the cemetery of the monks, which can only be visited by the special permission of the superior. At the end of a long arbour of grape-vines, a narrow staircase cut in the rock, leads to an excavated square, of about twenty feet; on the left, is a small door opening into a vault, where formerly the bodies of the dead monks were laid on an iron bedstead, and there suffered to remain, till all the corruptible part was gone, and only the dry bones remained. Now they are buried for about three years, or as long as may be necessary to effect the same object; and when the flesh has disappeared, the bones are deposited in the great cemetery, the door of which is directly opposite. Within the door is a small anti-chamber containing a divan, and a portrait of some saint, who is said to have wandered eighteen years in the desert without meat or drink. "From this

of that name. All the feelings
'h which we look upon the grave,
etely destroyed, by this peculiarly
of heaping together in a promis-
relics of mortality."

the door opens into the cemetery," says Mr. Stephens, "which is so different from any that I had ever seen, that I started back on the threshold with surprise. Along the wall was an excavation about thirty feet in length, but of what depth I could not tell. It was enclosed by a fence, which was three or four feet above the ground and filled with human skulls; and in front, extending along the whole width of the chamber, was a pile of bones about twenty feet high, and running back some distance. They were very regularly displayed in layers, the feet and shoulders being placed outwards alternately, and by the side of the last skeleton, was a vacant place for the next that should be ready. The superior told me that there were more than 30,000 skeletons in the cemetery, literally an army of dead men's bones. Besides the pile of skulls and bones, in a chamber adjoining were the bones of the Archbishops, in open boxes, with their names and ages labelled on them, and those of two sons of a king of Persia, who came hither on a pilgrimage, and died in the convent; their iron shirts, the only dress they wore on their long journey from their father's court, are in the same box. Other skeletons were lying about, some in baskets, others tied together and hanging from the roof. In one corner were the bones of a pious anchoret, called St. Stephen,

after the martyr of that name. All the feelings of solemnity, with which we look upon the grave, were here completely destroyed, by this peculiarly revolting mode of heaping together in a promiscuous mass the relics of mortality."

CHAPTER XXII.

On the morning after his arrival at the convent of St. Catherine, Mr. Fisk and his fellow traveller started for their excursion to the top of Sinai, at half-past four o'clock. They were accompanied by two of the younger monks and several of the Arabs, who, by directions of the Superior, attended for the purpose of conveying provisions.

The ascent was commenced at a deep ravine, lying at the back of the convent, and the first stage carried them over that part of Horeb which forms a foundation, from which Gebel Mousa, the alleged peak of Mount Sinai, springs. This part of the journey was made tolerably easy, by the large slabs of granite, disposed in such order as to give a firm footing; but as many have been washed away from time to time, by winter torrents, some effort was required to keep the road. In about half an hour the ascent became still more steep, and the way lay between impending masses of vast magnitude, and through two arched gateways at a short distance from each other: the first

of these reminded Mr. Fisk of the "wicket gate" of John Bunyan, whither Evangelist directs Christian. The latter archway led to a rather extensive plain or platform, in which grows a fine towering cypress, and near it is a roughly constructed stone building, called the chapel of the convent, and another in commemoration of the flight of Elijah to Horeb, when persecuted by the infamous Jezebel. The cave to which they afterwards came is as desolate a place of refuge as the fancy can conceive, one to which neither the revenge of woman nor the cruelty of man would ever dream of pursuing its victim. No tree gives its shade, no brook or pool is nigh to quench the burning thirst, not a shrub grows on the savage soil. Every part of the way was strewed with broken fragments of rocks and cliffs, as if the words still allowed a literal fulfilment, "a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks." It is a spot in which discontent and sadness might easily gather on the spirit, even of the most tried and faithful; the more so when utter loneliness was combined with the fearful and melancholy aspects of nature, so different here from the beautiful solitudes of Samaria, which the fugitive prophet had just quitted.

From this spot the heavy and massive summit of Mount Sinai, resembling more, if the loftiest

thing may be compared with the small, the appearance of many embattled towers than a mountain peak. In front, and but at a short distance, towers the sharp and beautiful peak of Horeb. "We saw these scenes," says a recent traveller, "only beneath the serenest sky and the loveliest atmosphere possible. When the tempest thickens around them, with the thunder and lightning that sometimes prevail, it is easy to imagine that the effect must be awful and terrific in the extreme."

From the cave of Elijah the direct ascent of Sinai is made. Toilsome and difficult in the extreme, but, from the accounts of all travellers, amply repaying them for their most fatiguing exertions.

"Among all the stupendous works of nature," says Mr. Stephens, "not a place can be selected more fitted for the exhibition of Almighty power. I have stood upon the summit of the giant Etna, and looked over the clouds floating beneath it, upon the bold scenery of Sicily and the distant mountains of Calabria; upon the top of Vesuvius and looked down upon the waves of lava, and the ruined and half recovered cities at its foot; but they are nothing compared with the terrific solitudes and black majesty of Sinai. Not a tree, or shrub, or blade of grass, is to be seen upon the bare and rugged sides of innumerable mountains, heaving their naked summits to the skies,

while the crumbling masses of granite all around, and the distant view of the Syrian desert, with its boundless waste of sands, form the wildest and most dreary, the most terrific and desolate spectacle that imagination can conceive."

"A sea of desolation," says another traveller, "as if Arabia Petræa had once been an ocean of lava, and that while its waves were literally mountains high, it was commanded suddenly to stand still."

The summit of the peak is a plain of about sixty feet in circumference, and on it stands the church which, to Christian pilgrims, is the principal object of the ascent. It is built of granite, but has suffered much from the exertions of the Arabs to discover the Tables of Law, which they believe to be concealed underneath the building, and in the hope of finding which they have made numerous excavations on all sides of it. The Moslems have also a small church a little below the summit, which they hold in great veneration and make it the place of their pilgrimage. The Bedouins, too, visit it and slaughter sheep in honour of the Jewish lawgiver, to whom they make vows, and entreat his intercession in their behalf. These poor people are not without peculiar relics of their own on this mountain, for they show a place in the rock, which somewhat resembles the form of a foot, and which the Mos-

lems firmly believe to have been made by Mahomet when he visited the mountain.

In a valley between the two mountains is shown, among many other objects of veneration, the supposed rock from whence water issued at the command of Moses. It is an irregular block of granite, about twelve feet high, with about twenty holes in the surface, evidently the work of art, though it is sincerely believed otherwise by the monks of Sinai, as well as by the Bedouins. The latter place offerings of grass in them, as a tribute to the memory of Moses, in the same manner as they place it upon the tombs of their saints, because grass is to them the most precious of all the gifts of nature, and that upon which their existence chiefly depends. They also bring hither their female camels, believing that by making them kneel before the sacred rock, while they recite some prayers and renew the grass in the fissures of the stone, their camels will become fruitful, and yield milk in abundance. That this rock is neither the real rock of Meribah, nor the "Valley," that of Rephidim, is clear from the fact that here, and in upper Sinai, perennial springs are so numerous as to supersede all occasion for a miraculous supply of water. Not far from this, is shown a small and apparently natural excavation, in a granite rock, where it is said that Moses often sat, and a circular pro-

jecting knot in a rock, resembling in size and shape the lid of a kettle, is pointed out as the pot or kettle of Moses. The Arabs have often vainly endeavoured to break this rock, supposing it to conceal great treasure.

The mountain of St. Catharine is higher and more picturesque than that of Moses, and the ascent is very difficult, but is rewarded by extensive views over the Gulfs of Akaba and Suez, as the two branches of the Red Sea, which embrace the peninsula, are called. The island Tersau, the village of Tor, and the high ground near Suez, are among the distant points which may be distinguished, to which Mr. Laborde adds the mountains of Africa. The top of Sinai is seen far below. All the rest is the same "sea of desolation," the same confusion of granite mountains and valleys destitute of verdure, which have already been noticed.

The sharp peak in which this mountain, like the other, terminates, consists of an immense block of granite, the smooth surface of which is ascended with difficulty. On the immediate summit is only a small chapel, or shed, badly built with loose, uncemented stones, and hardly high enough to allow a person to stand upright. It covers the spot from which the body of St. Catharine is said to have been taken, although the floor is hard and solid rock.

CHAPTER XXIII.

In travelling towards Sinai, Laborde mentions that his attendant searched among the ruins of some tombs, at a place called Sacbout El Cadem, for turquoise stones, which are found there in great abundance, being brought to the surface by the rains. "He gave me five of these stones, which were of considerable value, parting with them without the slightest reluctance." The Arabs of the present day, attach no value to the turquoise, though in former ages it was much sought after in the East; the most extraordinary medicinal qualities having been ascribed to it. A person spending a few days upon Mount Sinai might make a large collection of these gems, which, though not to be ranked among the highest class of precious stones, nevertheless possess a certain value.

One of the specimens of rock from Sinai which make the most beautiful appearance in Roziére's plates of the "Description de l'Egypte" is named by him talcose quartz, and we are told that it forms very extensive beds towards the middle of the

route, which leads from the Sinai range to the extremity of the peninsula, and strata of rock-salt are also very frequent. In several parts of the road the traveller observes holes out of which rock-salt has been dug; and in the cliffs which bound some of them, rock-salt is seen among the sandstones. It is also obtained by excavation, white and perfectly clean. "They showed us some," says Lord Lindesay, "fit for the table of an Emperor."

Among other plants two kinds of gourd have been observed, distinguished for their bitterness, either of which may have been that used by the prophet Elisha. The first is called coloquintida, and produces the valuable medicine known by that name. This grows in abundance near Mount Sinai, where it was found by Robinson at the latter end of March, when its yellow fruit was ripe. It is called, in English, the little cucumber, its tendrils run over the ground sometimes to a considerable extent, and the gourds are so numerous as to be crushed under the feet of the passengers, whether men or animals. The dry gourd when bruised discharges the valuable drug, contained in it, in the shape of powder. The Arabs use the plant to make tinder by the following process. After roasting the root in the ashes, they wrap it in a wetted cotton cloth, and beat it between two stones, by

which means the juice of the fruit is expressed, and absorbed by the cloth, which is dyed by it of a dirty blue, and after being dried in the sun, ignites with the slightest spark of fire. Around Mount Sinai also grows the Shittim Acacia, or Gum Arabic tree. It is of the middle size, the young branches are armed with twin thorns, and the flowers are like little golden balls, hanging gracefully among the leaves, and giving a sweet smell. The valuable gum arabic exudes from the bark. The wood is considered incorruptible, and is so hard and close-grained as to take an excellent polish, and for this reason it was selected as a peculiarly fit material for the ark in the wilderness. Its leaves often furnish food for camels when little else is to be obtained. Robinson mentions a species of very thorny acacia near Sinai, producing a little gum arabic of inferior quality, which, when not too indolent, the Arabs sometimes gather and sell. The ground is sometimes covered with the large thorns of these trees, which are a great annoyance to the Bedouin and his cattle. Each Bedouin carries in his girdle, a pair of small pincers, to extract the thorns from his feet, which are protected only by a pair of sandals made of camel's skin, and fastened on with leathern thongs. The gum is said to have a sweet and rather agreeable taste, and upon journeys, the Bedouins pretend it is a preventative of

thirst, and that the person who chews it may pass a whole day without feeling any inconvenience from the want of water. The pods which the tree produces, together with the tenderest shoots of the branches, serve as fodder to the camels, and the bark is used by the Arabs to tan leather. It is remarkable that almost every tree which furnishes tasteless gums or resins is covered with a bark that is highly astringent and bitter to the taste. A plant also grows in the neighbourhood of Sinai, from which the Arabs obtain a substitute for soap, by pounding it when dry between stones, and mixing it with the water in which they wash their linen. This is the Salsola Kali, the ashes of which are used by us in the manufacture of soap.

In the Sinai range, the bird Katta, a species of partridge is found in such large flocks, during the months of May and June, that the Arabs often kill two or three at a time, merely by throwing a stick among them, and collect their eggs, which they lay in the rocky ground in great numbers. Mr. Burckhardt thinks that this bird is the quail of the children of Israel.

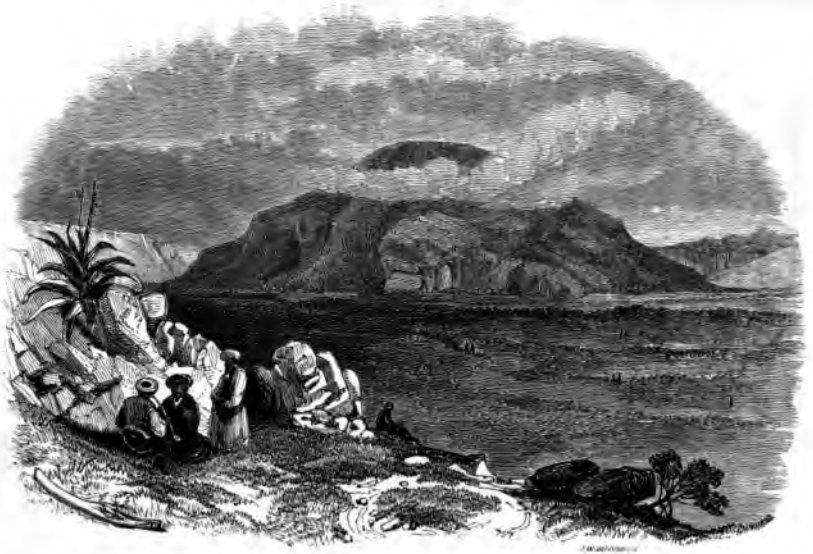
The female Bedouins who frequent Mount Sinai, are described as being fully as hardy as the men, and are early accustomed to fatiguing duties, for among the Arabs it is an established rule that neither men nor boys should

drive the cattle to pasture. A boy would feel insulted were any one to say, "Go and drive your father's sheep to pasture;" these words, in his opinion, would signify, "You are no better than a girl." This employment thus becomes the exclusive one of the unmarried girls of the camp, who perform it by turns. They set out before sunrise, three or four of them in company, carrying victuals and some water, and do not return till late in the evening. During the whole day they continue exposed to the sun, carefully watching the sheep, for they are sure of being severely beaten by their father should any be lost. Sometimes they may be seen running barefoot over sharp rocks, where the well-shod traveller can with difficulty step along. If a man of their tribe passes through the pasturing ground, they offer to him sheep's milk, or share with him their scanty stock of water, as kindly as their parents would have treated him in their tents. The milk of their flocks is a more important consideration with an Oriental than the wool or the flesh, and is regarded as quite superior in quality to the milk of cows, especially for their favourite sour curd.

In Mr. Burckhardt's visit to Mount Sinai, he describes a curious trait of superstition on the part of his Arab guides, which appears to have much interfered with his pursuits. "I was obliged," he says, "to conceal wholly from my guides

that I took notes of my journey, lest I should be thought a necromancer, or in search of treasures. Had I visited the convent of Mount Sinai in the character of a Frank, with the Pasha's firman, and had returned as travellers usually do, from thence to Cairo, I should not have hesitated to take notes openly, because the Towara Arabs dread the Pasha, and dare not insult any one under his protection. But wishing to penetrate into a part of the country occupied by other tribes, it became of importance that I should conceal my pursuits." An Arab, however, happened to surprise Mr. Burckhardt while engaged in taking notes, and instantly accused him of wishing to be instrumental in the ruin of the country; adding, "that some years since several men, God knows who they were, came to the country, visited the mountains, wrote down everything, stones, plants, animals, even serpents and spiders, and that since then little rain had fallen, and the game had greatly decreased; that these sorcerers wrote down certain charms, and stopped the rains to transfer them to their own country." These dangerous visitors were two gentlemen who travelled for the Emperor of Austria some years since, collecting specimens of natural history, and who sent Arabs to hunt for all kinds of animals. "After our return to the convent," says Mr. Burckhardt, "the report spread among the Arabs

that I was a writer like those who had preceded me, and I thus completely lost their confidence, though I continued on good terms during the remainder of the journey." This the aid of good and plentiful fare enabled Mr. Burckhardt to do, for the Bedouins in general have the most voracious appetites, and he tells us that a few shillings, laid out in victuals, have more effect than pounds given as presents. One of his guides spoke with peculiar complacency of having once in his younger days, eaten at a meal, with three others, the whole of a mountain goat. Whoever travels with them, therefore, should feed them abundantly, and invite all strangers met with on the road to share their repasts. The reputation for hospitality which the traveller thus gains facilitates his progress on all occasions. The virtue of hospitality is cherished most carefully among this primitive people, and Mr. Burckhardt mentions another very pleasing trait in the character, and that is the confidence they place in each other. Near a well, the waters of which are never known to dry up, he saw different articles of Bedouin furniture suspended on several trees in the valley leading to it. These were left by the owners during their absence, in order not to have the trouble of carrying them about, and no instance is known of any of the articles so left having ever been stolen.



MOUNT TABOR.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MOUNT TABOR.

THE plain of Esdraelon in Palestine is often mentioned in Sacred History, under the names of the Valley of Megiddo, and the Valley of Jezreel. It was the "mighty plain" of the ancients, celebrated for more than three thousand years, as the great battle-ground of the Jewish and other nations. Exclusive of three great arms which stretch eastward towards the valley of the Jordan, this extensive plain may be said to be in the form of an acute triangle, having a measure of from thirteen to fourteen miles on the north, about eighteen on the east, and above twenty on the south-west. Before the verdure of spring and early summer has been parched up by the heat and drought of the late summer and autumn, the view of the great plain of Esdraelon is, from its fertility and beauty, very charming. In June, yellow fields of grain, with green patches of millet and cotton, chequer the landscape like

a carpet. The plain itself is almost without villages, but there are several on the slopes of the inclosing hills, especially on the side of Mount Carmel.

"The plain of Esdraelon," says Dr. Clarke, "has been the chosen place for encampment in every contest carried on in this country, from the days of Nebuchodonosor, King of the Assyrians, until the disastrous march of Napoleon Bonaparte from Egypt into Syria. Jews, Gentiles, Saracens, Crusaders, Egyptians, Persians, Druses, Turks, Arabs, and French, warriors out of every nation which is under heaven, have pitched their tents upon the plain of Esdraelon, and have beheld their banners wet with the dews of Tabor and Hermon."

Here took place the remarkable victory of Gideon, and the last fatal overthrow of Saul; here the hosts of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword before Barak, who came down upon them with an overwhelming army from Mount Tabor, and here the memorable contests took place between the Kings of Judah and Egypt, which occasioned such distinguished scenes of national mourning.

The last dreadful conflict that occurred in this memorable spot, was in the spring of 1799.

When the French invaded Syria, Nazareth was occupied by from six to eight hundred men,

whose advanced posts were at Tabaria and Szaffad. Two hours' journey from hence, General Kleber sustained, with a corps not exceeding fifteen hundred men, the attack of the whole Syrian army, amounting to at least twenty-five thousand. He was posted in the plain of Esdraelon near the village of Foule, where he formed his battalion into a square, which continued fighting from sunrise to mid-day, until they had expended almost all their ammunition. Bonaparte, informed of Kleber's perilous situation, advanced to his support with six hundred men. No sooner had he come in sight of the enemy, and fired a shot over the plain, than the Turks, supposing that a large force was advancing, took precipitately to flight, during which several thousands were killed, and many drowned in the river Daboury, which then inundated a part of the plain. Bonaparte that evening dined at Nazareth, the most northern point that he reached in Syria, where he declared that the recollection of the sacred scene which had once taken place on Mount Tabor, came to his remembrance in the thickest of the fight.

On the borders of Esdraelon, Mount Tabor stands out alone from the surrounding hills in magnificent grandeur. Seen from the south-west its fine proportions present a semi-globular appearance, but from the north-west it more resembles a truncated cone, rising about a thousand

feet from the plain. The beauty of the mountain, and its conspicuous position, rendered it a favourite subject of poetic contemplation,—and when the Psalmist exclaims, "Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name!" he selects these two as the representatives of all the mountains of Palestine,—the former as the most graceful, and the latter as the loftiest.

In ascending Mount Tabor, Dr. Robinson observes, "that he found the path generally good, so that he rode easily quite to the summit in an hour; the path winding considerably, obviously ancient, and in many parts steps hewn out in the rock, the whole way delightfully shaded by a thick overgrowth of the ilex pistachio, and other trees, while now and then, the delicate and graceful gazelle might be seen grazing on the neighbouring hills." The proper summit of the mountain consists of a beautiful little oblong plain or basin, skirted on the south-west by a ledge of rocks of some height, covered with foundations and ruins, and on the north-east by lower rocks; and this higher ground on both sides is thickly overgrown with bushes and small trees, while the basin itself lies in grass without trees or ruins.

Perhaps one of the noblest panoramic views in the world is that obtained from the highest point of the ruins on the summit. North-west,

in the distance, is the ridge of Carmel. South are the lovely mountains of Samaria, running east, west, and bounding the plain of Esdraelon, where the chariot of Ahab once rolled as the monarch fled from danger. Immediately in front of these are the hills of Gilboa; and nearer is little Hermon, overshadowing the cities of Endor and Nain. On the east stretches out the scene of the Redeemer's early ministry, while, embosomed in its undulations, the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee reflect the sunbeam. South of the lake is the plain of Jericho, and beyond rise up the distant peaks of Anti-Libanus, while onwards to the north, the vast mass of Lebanon sets up its noble snow-capped barriers.

"The sun," says Dr. Robinson, "rose gloriously upon us as we sat at the door of our tent, upon the summit of Tabor. A very heavy dew had fallen during the night; so that the tent was wet as with rain. After the sun had been up about half an hour, a fog came on, and veiled everything below from our view, but when it cleared away, glorious was the prospect."

The summit of Tabor is subject to such morning fogs, which hang around like a fleecy crown.

There are remains of several small ruined tanks on the crest, which still catch the mists and rain-water dripping through the crevices of the rock, and preserve it cool and clear, it is said, through-

out the year. "Near the summit of the mount," says Mr. Fisk, "hid in a cavern approached by a few rude steps, is a most delicious well of liquid crystal. Fatigued and weary, we descended, and found the water to be of icy coldness. The burning sun could not reach it. A black Nubian slave belonging to the muleteers who accompanied us, sat on his heels in mute surprise at our ecstasy on meeting with such delicious refreshment in so unexpected a place."

The tops of the range of hills, with which Tabor is connected by a low ridge, are barren, but the slopes and valleys afford pasturage, and are capable of cultivation from the numerous springs to be met with in all directions. Cultivation is, however, found chiefly on the seaward slopes; there, many flourishing villages exist, and every inch of ground is turned to account by the industrious natives.

Mount Tabor is mentioned in all the pilgrimages to the Holy Land, during the Crusades, as containing one of the sanctuaries usually visited in these pious journeys. But Josephus furnishes us with a remarkable instance of its having been resorted to, at a far earlier period, as a place of security, and encompassed with a wall by himself in a short space of time, to resist the Roman army. "In forty days' time Josephus encompassed the top with a wall, furnished it with other materials and

water, from below, but when the latter failed them, they fled to Jerusalem." Tradition, too, speaks of a city built on the top, which sustained a five years' siege, drawing its supplies by skirmish from below, and being furnished with water from the two excellent cisterns, still in existence above; but as no fixed period is assigned to this event it may probably relate to the siege of Vespasian just alluded to. Sufficient evidences remain, however, of its having been a place of great strength, and when it lost its reputation as a stronghold, it assumed a new one of a holy sanctuary, so that the accumulated vestiges of successive forts and altars are now mingled in one common ruin. Of comparatively modern buildings, a rude chapel is standing near the fortress, dedicated to the Transfiguration, with three altars, answering to the proposed three tabernacles,—but that the Transfiguration took place on Mount Tabor is quite a gratuitous supposition, at least such is the opinion of many intelligent travellers.

"The Christians," says Mr. Burckhardt, "consider Mount Tabor a holy place in honour of the Transfiguration, but the exact spot at which it took place is not known, and both the Latins and Greeks are at variance on the subject. The Latins celebrate the sacred event in a small cavern where they have formed a chapel, at about five minutes' walk from which the Greeks have built

a low circular wall, with an altar before it, for the same purpose. The Latin missionaries of the Frank convent of Nazareth send annually two fathers to celebrate a mass in their chapel, they generally choose St. Peter's day for making this visit. The Greek priests of Nazareth visit their chapel of Mount Tabor on the festival of the Virgin, on which occasion several thousand pilgrims repair to the mountain, where they pass the night under tents with their families, in mirth and feasting."

The small village of Deborah, where she who judged Israel is reported to have dispensed her decrees, is situated at the foot of Mount Tabor, and the little stream which flows at no great distance from it, is called the lesser Kishon. Here the people "came up for judgment," and it is worthy of remark that, at the present day, the Arabs assemble at the foot of the same mountain every Monday, to hold a bazaar, and dispose of their merchandise; the governor of Tabaria, in whose jurisdiction the place is, either attending himself, or sending a deputy, for the dispensation of justice. The meeting is held in the open plain, as it might be, "under the palm-tree of Deborah;" and close to the spot are some ruins, at which all those who are debtors for tributes or duties, are accustomed to pay them. Although it is merely related in the Book of Judges, that

the "people came up for judgment" to stated places at different periods, it is, nevertheless, by no means improbable that they did at the same time transact other business, and that the meeting was also taken advantage of for the sale of merchandise, out of which ancient practice the present one seems to have grown: the people assemble here from every part of the central country, and from all the coast, as far as Jaffa.

Mount Tabor, and the adjoining hills and plains are still the haunt of the leopard, and the wild hog is sometimes startled from the thick bushes. The latter, it is said, feeds chiefly on the root of the liquorice, which grows abundantly in most of the Eastern plains; and in the proper season, that is, in the beginning of autumn and winter, the flesh of the animal is delicious, very fat, and easily digestible. The hogs sometimes approach very near to the towns and villages, attracted by the gardens which surround them; and where there are any European settlers, they are shot by the peasants, who lie in wait for them at the fountains or streams, to which they at night come to drink. They then place the carcasses of the "unclean beasts" on asses, and convey them for sale to the Franks. Amongst the craggy rocks of Mount Tabor, are to be seen the remains of many cedars, with which

Lebanon once also abounded, and at the foot of the mountain, by the sides of the little streams, flourishes in great beauty, the Rose-bay or Oleander, which grows everywhere in Syria, and whether by the banks of the Jordan, or in some quiet valley by the side of a gentle stream, is always lovely and luxuriant. Robinson mentions it as being abundant in the neighbourhood of Petra, blooming in the valleys, and forming with its myriads of large red blossoms a striking contrast to the desert rocks around. Burckhardt speaks of a rivulet running in a deep valley through a wood of oleanders which formed a canopy over the rivulet impenetrable by the meridian sun. The red flowers of these trees reflected in the river gave it the appearance of a bed of roses, and presented a singular contrast to the whitish grey rocks, which border the wood on either side. The water was almost warm, and had a disagreeable taste, probably from the quantity of flowers that had fallen into it. As the green bay is not very common in Judea, though found in the ancient gardens of Tyre and Sidon, Hasselquist was led to consider that the rose bay, being constantly found flourishing so luxuriantly by the waters of Palestine, was the shrub alluded to by David, under the name of the "tree of the righteous."

Other naturalists are of opinion that it is the

willow of Scripture. "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept: when we remembered thee, O Zion. As for our harps, we hanged them up: upon the trees that are therein." (Psalm cxxxvii. 1, 2.)

CHAPTER XXV.

MOUNT ZION.

MOUNT ZION is the name of one of the four hills on which Jerusalem was built, the other three being Mount Acra, Mount Moriah, and Mount Bezetha; of these Zion was the highest, and was the southern portion of the ancient city, containing the city of David, strongly fortified within a wall of great solidity, which enabled the Jebusites so long to keep it as their stronghold, and to retain their command over the lower part of the city, even when they were obliged to allow the Israelites to share in its occupation. The foundations of the palace of David, it is said, are still to be traced on the rocky brow of Zion, and the supposed sepulchres of that monarch and his son Solomon are said also to be there, though the exact spot is not known. The city of Jerusalem most probably began at the southern or Mount Zion part, and its circuit, according to Josephus, amounted to thirty-three furlongs; whereas that of the mo-

MOUNT ZION.

dern city does not appear to exceed two miles and a-half. It was enclosed with strong high walls, and towers, and flanked at all points. From the rear of David's city a bridge led to Calvary and Zion. Zion is now partly without the city, the wall running across the hill. That part lying within it is chiefly occupied by the citadel, where some irregular troops are stationed to guard the gates, &c.; it is surrounded by a deep trench. Over this, a covered wooden bridge leads into the interior of the citadel, and on its benches are often seen the Pashas of Jerusalem, smoking their pipes, and, surrounded by their officers, administering justice. In front of the citadel is an open square, used as a fruit and vegetable market. Here the women collect every morning from various places, with the produce of their gardens and fields, which they sell to the greengrocers of the town, when an absurd scene commences. The buyer offers a price, the seller says it is not sufficient, abuse follows, they scream, quarrel, and shake each other, till the whole market-place is in a perfect state of confusion; yet in a very short time order is restored, and by nine o'clock, the square is cleared. The other buildings on Mount Zion are two convents, the English hospital for sick Jews, the Jewish Quarter, the temporary English church, and the tower of Hippicus. The latter is one of the three

towers built by Herod the Great, and has thus survived the destruction of ages. Chateaubriand describes Zion as of a barren appearance, opening in the form of a crescent towards the city; he says, "from the top of the hill to the south you see the valley of Ben Hinnon; beyond this the field of blood, purchased with the thirty pieces of silver given to the traitor Judas; the hill of evil counsel; the tombs of the Judges; and the whole desert towards Hebron and Bethlehem;—to the north, the wall of Jerusalem, which passes over the brow of Mount Zion, and intercepts the view of the city. On passing from the city by the Zion gate, the first object that meets the eye is a dingy-looking Turkish Mosque, called the Mosque of David, and believed, without any authority, to have been built over his tomb, which is still exhibited in the interior, and held in high veneration by the Moslems. To the right of this mosque, and between it and the city-gate, stands a small Armenian chapel, said to be built on the spot where once stood the palace of Caiaphas. A few paces to the west is a Christian burial-ground. A little to the south of this, is pointed out a spot where the Virgin Mary is said to have expired, and on the north side, the place where the cock crew, and where Peter went out, and wept bitterly." The sides of the hill of Zion have a pleasing aspect, as they possess

a few olive trees, and rude gardens. "At the time," says Dr. Richardson, "when I visited this sacred ground, one part of it supported a crop of barley; another was undergoing the labour of the plough, and the soil turned up consisted of stone and lime mixed with earth, such as is usually met with in the foundations of ruined cities. It is nearly a mile in circumference, is highest on the west side, and towards the east falls down in broad terraces on the upper part of the mountain, and narrow ones on the side, as it slopes down towards the brook Kedron. Each terrace is divided from the one above it, by a low wall built of the ruins of this celebrated spot. The terraces near the bottom of the hill are still used as gardens, and are watered from the pool of Siloam. They belong chiefly to the inhabitants of the small village of Siloa immediately opposite." We have here another remarkable instance of the fulfilment of prophecy: — "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps." (Micah iii. 12.)

The following beautiful passage occurs in Mr. Richardson's travels along the Mediterranean, and it is admirably expressive of what we are convinced is a general state of feeling on the subject. "In passing up to the synagogue, I was particularly struck with the mean and *wretched appearance* of the houses on both sides of

the streets, as well as with the poverty of their inhabitants. The sight of a poor Jew in Jerusalem has in it something peculiarly affecting. The heart of this wonderful people, in whatever clime they roam, still turns to it as to the city of their promised rest. They take pleasure in her ruins, and would kiss the very dust for her sake. Jerusalem is the centre round which the exiled sons of Judah build, in imagination, the mansions of their future greatness. In whatever part of the world he may live, the heart's desire of the Jew is to be buried in Jerusalem. Thither they return from Spain and Portugal, from Egypt and Barbary, and other countries, among which they have been scattered, and when, after all their longings, and all their struggles up the steeps of life, we see them poor, blind, and naked, in the streets of their once happy Zion, he must have a cold heart that can remain untouched by their sufferings, without offering a prayer that God would have mercy on the darkness of Judah, and that the day-star of Bethlehem might arise in their hearts."

THE END.

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